

SPRING, 1952

RELIGION IN LIFE

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A Christian Quarterly

OF OPINION AND DISCUSSION

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RELIGION IN LIFE is published quarterly by Abingdon-Cokesbury Press at \$1.25 per copy. Subscription price, \$4.00 per year in the United States and possessions and Mexico; Canada, postage 18 cents per year additional; other foreign postage 30 cents per year additional.

Publication office, 810 Broadway, Nashville 2, Tennessee. Editorial office, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, New York. Entered as Second Class Matter, August 26, 1942, at the post office in Nashville, Tennessee, under Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided in Section 1103, Act of Oct. 3, 1917, authorized March 16, 1923.

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A CHRISTIAN QUARTERLY of opinion and discussion

VOL. XXI

Spring, 1952

No. 2

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"The Inward Cross"

CHARLES DUELL KEAN

WHEN you and I, as the drama of Calvary is played to the conclusion, contemplate the cross, we see either the stark evidence of a tragedy that is over or we see the creative symbol of a new power and vision in which we can share. If we see only an outward cross, we see only the former; but if the cross has become an inward reality in our own hearts, then we see the latter, not just in theory but in fact.

The inward cross means that I am a new man, living in a new world, because Jesus Christ died for me that I might live today by his spirit, related to my brethren by a common faith built upon his foundation. It means that I am ready to accept death as the measure of life, going ahead with confidence in the purpose of God, provided I share the humility of the cross. It means that this tortured world in which I live has a hope that cannot be betrayed, if once it is understood for what it is meant to be. It means that you and I may live now by triumphant faith.

—*The Inward Cross*, by Charles Duell Kean, p. 61.
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Sin and Salvation

WILLARD L. SPERRY

SOME YEARS AGO, meeting one of my colleagues after a summer vacation, I asked him what he had been reading since we had parted at Commencement. He said, "Well, among other things, I have been trying to read Whitehead's *Process and Reality*. I sat up nights with it, a wet towel around my head. When I had finished I think I understood about a tenth of it, and I call that a pretty good average for one who is not a professional philosopher!"

All of us who have tackled Whitehead know what he meant. Whitehead is not easy reading. His ideas are abstract and often unfamiliar. But the initial difficulty lies in the actual vocabulary which he uses. He has, however, given us some first aid in that matter. I once asked him to come over and speak to us at our Divinity School. He was busy with one of his books and could not spare the time. Then he went on to say, "It is not as though I cannot speak and write simply, without too much effort. That is my native manner. I have to work hard to be obscure. But years ago Bertrand Russell and I were working on a joint book on logic and we came to the conclusion that part of the difficulty in grasping logic derived from the fact that most texts on the subject make use of far too many conventional words which have been worn so threadbare that they have lost all living meaning and have become little more than professional jargon or academic incantations. So we decided to abandon all such words and coin a new vocabulary, explained in a glossary at the end of our book, which would compel the reader to rethink his premises."

Religion makes constant use of words so long accepted that like the face of a worn coin one can no longer trace their original "image and superscription." These words were coined in the first instance to represent major facts, or profound experiences. With the passage of time they tend to lose their connection with the original facts and experiences which prompted them and become verbal tags having little vital content. They

WILLARD L. SPERRY, D.D., D.Litt., is Dean of Harvard Divinity School and Professor of Christian Morals at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. He contributes the leading article for this discussion, which seeks to discern the ways in which modern man can apprehend the eternal meaning of man's quest for salvation.

always were a kind of paper currency, intimations of realities, rather than attempted definitions of reality. They are theologically necessary; we cannot exchange ideas without them and as long as we are agreed as to their denominations they serve their purpose. But they are not themselves the unminted gold reserve which they presuppose. They lose their reference to their "Fort Knox" warrant, and if that reserve is itself impaired or wanting they are liable to wild inflation, or depreciation. Thus, though we continue to use such words as "religion" and "Christianity" and cannot do without them, we should never forget that no man hath seen religion or Christianity at any time. We see intimations of God, we see godly men, we see individual Christians. So, also, "we would see Jesus."

Or, once again, all our theological trade words, necessary to the interchange of ideas, are rather like the bits of ice beneath a thin fall of snow on a wintry sidewalk. One skids on them, slides across them, without ever getting a solid foothold. The mind and the eye and the tongue slip easily over them without stopping to ask what they originally meant, and ought still to mean. Cardinal Newman once said, "Nothing is easier than to use the word (God), and mean nothing by it."

Thus our homiletics teacher at Yale Divinity School used to tell us that we ought to avoid in the pulpit these too familiar, now rather slippery words in the theological vocabulary. He warned us against such terms as "Incarnation," "Atonement," and the like, words with a great history and greater repute, but conventional words with no single agreed-upon meaning. He advised us rather to try to get back to the facts and experiences which begot the words, and to attempt to recreate them in a fresh vocabulary. His warning may have been a counsel of perfection, but it was more nearly right than wrong.

Here, then, we have in hand two such words, "Sin" and "Salvation." They have become so worn out that in most liberal Protestant circles they have largely dropped out of use. They carry with them so many connotations which have become either unintelligible or incredible that it seems sensible to retire them from circulation altogether, since we are not clear just what we should mean by them. At least we can say that their conventional and vociferous use by unoriginal persons gives a noisy but hollow sound, as when one beats a big bass drum.

However, the difficulty in retiring these and kindred theological terms from our modern vocabulary carries with it the danger of ignoring the profound human experiences which prompted them. Religion cannot afford to run that risk and invite that grave loss. My own conviction is that

religion—as an immediate experience—is always orthodox, in that certain constancies persist and reappear; while theology, which is the reflective science by which these experiences are interpreted, is or ought always to be in process of becoming heretical. In other words, we use contemporary and probably increasingly accurate sciences to interpret elemental and universal facts. Our problem, in this instance as in all similar instances, is to try to conserve our religion at the same time that we continue to perfect our theology.

I

Let us begin, then, with the word "Sin." It is an unfashionable and unpopular word in modern Protestantism. It is of course to be distinguished from "sins" with the small "s." Very few serious persons are so self-righteous as to assert that they do not sin, in the form of the occasional vices to which they yield. They lose their tempers, they get angry, they are embittered at heart, they overindulge themselves, they allow themselves dubious white lies. All these "little" moral vagaries they concede and in their more sober moments regret. From time to time they try to mend their ways. They agree that to this extent they are sinners, but they suggest that this word is unnecessarily severe. They deny that they are victims of the all-over chronic liability which is what theology has meant by the major word "Sin." For "sinfulness" in the orthodox meaning of the word is not a single act nor the sum of such acts; it is a hereditary and chronic condition of our human nature and character. We are congenitally warped, deformed, diseased and, unless God chooses to save us, doomed. Our most earnest individual efforts can do little or nothing to help us. There is from the outset a first mortgage upon our too human stuff which no personal moral effort can ever pay off. If God chooses to foreclose the mortgage, no one can say that he is not warranted in so doing. So ran the ancient argument.

It was against this brutal doctrine of God and this depressing account of human nature that liberal theology finally rebelled. That revolt began in the late seventeenth century and was beginning to become widely vocal in America by the middle of the eighteenth century. Calvinism in New England had become more logical, sophisticated, and pitiless than any other prior theological system called Christian. New England Unitarianism was not primarily a denial of the doctrine of the Trinity. It was a bold bid in behalf of faith in the essential dignity and inherent worth of human nature in its entirety. In so far as its pioneer liberalism has communicated itself to other denominations, liberalizing them in turn, its in-

fluence on American theology has never been restricted to its own relatively modest numbers.

Methodism also shared in this reassuring vote of confidence in man. Thus Father Taylor, the famous old minister of the Boston Port Society, is said to have concluded a discussion with a local Calvinist in these words, "Well, as far as I can see you and I are in perfect agreement, save for one minor point; the Being whom you call your God I call my Devil!" Liberalism in American theology was matched by liberalism in our politics. Our modern religion and our politics are two faces of a single shield. Meanwhile, one of the paradoxes of American life has been the survival of the illiberal doctrine of man as professed in our more conservative churches on Sunday and the liberalism of our active life the other six days of the week. It has been this theoretically helpless and all but impotent and damned human creature who has, with the utmost self-reliance and resource, conquered a continent and built up the fabric of our culture.

Looking back one cannot help wondering how these two mutually exclusive accounts of human nature lived amicably side by side, and in many ultraconservative circles still continue to do so. For instance, few American theologians or none have ever carried the illiberal doctrine of man to such extremes as we find in Jonathan Edwards' writings. But there is in the story full warrant for Leslie Stephen's shrewd observation, "'Innocent as children may seem to be' (Edwards says), 'yet if they are out of Christ, they are not so in God's sight, but are young vipers, and are infinitely more hateful than vipers.' . . . That Edwards should have been a gentle, meditative creature, around whose knees had clung eleven 'young vipers' of his own begetting, is certainly an astonishing reflection."¹ It is no wonder that when the rigid framework of Calvinism began to crack it went to pieces all at once, like the Deacon's Wonderful One-Hoss Shay.

In so far as the elder vocabulary still survives and is formally repeated in our hymns and prayers, as well as in our sermons, it is often felt to lack real moral content. Thus, some years ago R. J. Campbell in his *New Theology* said that we get down on our knees on Sunday and confess that we are miserable sinners, but if on Monday someone actually accuses us of being such we shall ask him to particularize and then probably sue him for slander! We may continue to give lip service to the proposition that we are miserable sinners and there is no health in us, but these affirmations are thoughtlessly made and lack clear substance and conviction. Hence the conspicuous omission of these disparaging words in many liberal and

¹ *Hours in a Library.*

censored editions of the General Confession. The truth is that the average healthy American, if confronted with Edwards' Enfield Sermon and Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself*, rejects the sermon and casts his lot with the poem:

I could turn and live with the animals, they are so placid and self-contained.
I stand and look at them long and long;
They do not sweat and whine about their condition.
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins.²

Countless Americans are cursed with insomnia, but whatever the cause of it, it is not because they are hag-ridden by the spectre of "Original Sin."

On the other hand we should not jettison that idea too soon and too cavalierly. Behind its grim final formulation in Jonathan Edwards there must have lain some profound uneasiness and moral malaise. Quite apart from regret over the incidental vices of which we are guilty we still have, however emancipated we may be, occasional and more profound feelings of dissatisfaction with ourselves, and even distrust of ourselves. The "iron string of self-reliance" sometimes fails us. It is hard to describe this deeper unrest. It is as though one were a member of an orchestra, vaguely aware that one's instrument is slightly out of tune. Or as if one were rowing in a crew, but not in time and beat with its other seven members. I can still hear a coxswain monotonously shouting at me in an eight at Oxford, "Six, you're late; six, you're late." Experience itself, for what may seem at the moment inexplicable reasons, seems to yield these disquieting suggestions and suspicions. It may be doubted whether any human being is immune to them.

Arthur Hugh Clough was certainly not a Calvinist, and it may be doubted whether he would have accepted any Christian term as a self-designation. He was presumably an agnostic. Yet he wrote a little collection of poems gathered under the title, "Blank Misgivings of a Creature moving about in Worlds not realised." One of these poems says:

Like a child
In some strange garden left awhile alone,
I pace about the pathways of the world,
Plucking light hopes and joys from every stem,
With qualms of vague misgivings in my heart
That payment at the last will be required,
Payment I cannot make, or guilt incurred,
And shame to be endured.³

² Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*, p. 32.

³ *Poems of Arthur Hugh Clough*. New York, Macmillan and Co., 1903, p. 14.

These lines have always seemed to me to witness to an almost ineradicable sense of sin on the part of a theologically emancipated man. Even after one has sloughed off the vocabulary of orthodoxy the basic feeling of moral insecurity persists.

Liberals in general do not realize it, but our sciences tend to lean toward an illiberal rather than a liberal doctrine of man; the latter doctrine being the faith of romantic humanists. Thus, Thomas Huxley wrote to Charles Darwin that he had less sympathy with the "half-and-half sentimental school" of liberal theology than with "thoroughgoing orthodoxy." He once described his historic Romanes Lecture on *Evolution and Ethics* as "A very orthodox discourse on 'Satan, the Prince of this world,' " and added in explanation of that proposition:

. . . the doctrine of predestination, of original sin, of the innate depravity of man and the evil fate of the greater part of the human race, of the primacy of Satan in this world, of the essential vileness of matter, of a malevolent Demiurgus subordinate to a benevolent Almighty, who has only lately revealed himself, faulty as they are, appear to me vastly nearer the truth than the "liberal" popular illusions that babies are all born good, and that the example of a corrupt society is responsible for their failure to remain so; that it is given to everybody to reach the ethical ideal if he will only try . . . and that everything will come right at last.⁴

My impression is that the majority of biologists and anthropologists would agree, in substance, with Huxley's picturesque account of the matter. Tennyson once said that in age, and as an "evolutionist," he had climbed so high that he could no longer "hear the yelp of the beast," and intimated that mankind as a whole was beginning to reach those heights. But the biologists, fortified by the psychologists, are not so sure that we have reached that point. The ape and the tiger die hard in human nature and are by no means as inaudible as we might wish.

So, also with the new psychology. It has revealed to us a mental and emotional underworld which is far from reassuring. The thin veneer of our decencies seems to cover a whole realm of indecencies and even of potential immoralities which are profoundly disquieting. Instead of the bland self-assurance which has been the moral corollary of our self-reliance, we are today the victims of a deep self-distrust. Whether it be our sinful forefather Adam, the ape and the tiger, or the aggressive thrusts of a primitive and universal *libido*, something or some one of a very menacing nature is concealed in our underworld and is in danger of breaking through at any time, across "the threshold of consciousness." We are told

⁴ *Life and Letters of Thomas Huxley*, by Leonard Huxley. New York, D. Appleton and Co., 1902. Vol. II, p. 322.

that liberalism has cast out fear from our religion. On the contrary I doubt if there has been any period in modern times in which men were so afraid of one another as at this present hour, and what is still more disquieting, when so many persons have been afraid of *themselves*. We cannot fail to note that these newer sciences of the mind, for the want of any more accurate term, have fallen back on the old theological words "guilt feeling," as describing the problem to which they have to address themselves most constantly. They are prepared to diagnose and dismiss this feeling on purely naturalistic grounds, as an unnecessary pathological condition. But we must note that for the individual, whether he thinks of himself as a "sinner" or as a patient, the immediate experience of distress is qualitatively the same. Personally, I am inclined to think that the new psychology has rehabilitated the Calvinistic "sense of sin"—Original Sin—in forms which are in some ways more terrifying than those of the elder theology, precisely because our knowledge of human nature is more precise than once it was.

The renascence of the sense of sin finds further expression in our awareness of individual involvement in a very unideal society. This is something more disquieting than the passing uneasiness of having yielded to some private vice. We may not be initiators of the social evils of our day, but we are, simply by virtue of our membership in society, willing or unwilling partners in them. Thus, Tolstoi felt his partnership in all the injustices of the old Czarist regime. He recounts these wrongs and then says, as he cites them, "For me, for me" these things are happening all over Russia. H. G. Wells' Mr. Britling, learning to drive an automobile, nearly ran over a cyclist, before smashing into a wall. Reflecting on his experience he thought of himself no longer as a single individual, but as mankind in general charging its juggernaut across the world. He felt that vicariously he had killed many children on the highways of the world.

Suddenly all the pain and destruction and remorse of all the accidents in the world descended upon Mr. Britling. He became man on the automobile of civilization crushing his thousands daily in his headlong yet aimless career. This was a trick of Mr. Britling's mind. He had this tendency to spread outward from himself to generalized issues. . . . From remorse for smashing his guest and his automobile he could pass by what was, for him, the most imperceptible transitions, to remorse for every accident that has ever happened through the errors of an automobilist since automobiles began. All that long succession of blunders became Mr. Britling. Or rather Mr. Britling became that vast succession of blunders.

This may have been a generation ago a trick of Mr. Britling's mind. But it is no longer an isolated trick, it is the common habit of all persons

who today suffer from what Santayana calls "the agonized conscience" of Puritanism. The form may be modern, the substance is old yet ever new.⁵ The social gospel at its best, which means when it speaks in a penitent rather than a denunciatory tone, concedes to the full our feeling of social guilt for the sins of society, and offers us no cheap absolution.

Let me conclude these reflections on our modern versions of the doctrine of Original Sin by a quotation (taken from *Time*, Nov. 8, 1948), describing Dr. Oppenheimer's work at Los Alamos. He is cited as saying that as the first atomic bomb went off in the desert, he could think only of a passage from the *Bhagavad Gita*, "I am become death, the shatterer of worlds." He then adds that the aftermath of that experience left with him "a legacy of concern. . . . In some sort of crude sense which no vulgarity, no humor, no overstatement can quite extinguish, the physicists have known sin: and this is a knowledge which they cannot lose." I venture to think that most sensitive persons in America share that knowledge.

By far the most memorable chapter in Cardinal Newman's *Apologia* is that on "Position of My Mind since 1845." In the course of that chapter Newman says that, were it not for the witness of conscience, he should be an atheist. For looking over the world he saw "nothing else than the prophet's scroll, full of 'lamentations, mourning and woes.'" He could only conclude that "the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. It is out of joint with the purposes of its creator." Most of us feel today that we are implicated in a terrible corporate, contemporary rather than aboriginal, catastrophe. The modern world is out of joint with the purposes of God. One cannot attempt to escape from his share in the guilt of that catastrophe. He can only say, *Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*. Like Dr. Oppenheimer, each of us has "known sin."

II

Before we pass on to the idea of Salvation a word should perhaps be said as to the traditional conceptions of both Sin and Salvation. Sin is supposedly disobedience to the Will of God. The believer had no difficulty with this proposition so long as he was clear as to what the Will of God was. He got his certainties either from the pronouncements of the church or from the text of the Bible. Our initial difficulty today arises from the fact that in many, if not most, of the more important moral choices which we have to make, we have no advance assurance as to what God's

⁵ I cited the Huxley and Wells illustrations thirty years ago in an early book. The lapse of time may now allow their repetition here.

Will is. The moral responsibility for our choices and subsequent conduct is thrown back upon ourselves. Has God given us any clear revelation of his will as to negotiations in Korea? Should the proposed neutral zone follow the Thirty-eighth Parallel, or should it conform to the battle line as of the date of writing? On matters of this sort the divinely voiced trumpet gives a muted or equivocal sound. Yet the future of our whole civilization may well depend upon decisions of this sort. There are, it is true, countless individuals who are satisfied that in all such matters they know the will of God, but they warrant Bishop Barry's impatience at the tiresome ways of persons who always speak as though they were God's private secretary. They remind us of Cromwell's words, begging his over-dogmatic contemporaries to consider by the bowels of Christ that they might be mistaken.

So, also, of Salvation. Technically it is the moment or experience in which the burden of past sins is rolled away at some wicket gate. The emancipated sinner is freed from the guilt for his sins, both "original" and individual, and the penalty of the punishment of hell fire. The problem of his ethical future is never clearly solved. Theologians have differed as to whether he is to be, thereafter, endowed by God's grace, with "the blessed necessity of not sinning." In any case the fires of hell do not terrify us as once they did, and the kind of salvation we now seek—none the less religious on that account—is from our moral involvement in corporate immoralities, and their evil consequences for ourselves, even though we may have had little intimate part in creating the present situation. The hell from which we long to be saved is the only too familiar hell on earth of our own day.

Now, the basic idea behind the word "Salvation" is a negative rather than a positive one. We are saved *from* something. Thus, Salvation is "The saving of man from the spiritual consequences of sin: esp. deliverance from eternal damnation through the atonement of Christ" (Webster). The Christian idea of salvation had as its background the Jewish experience of being saved from Egyptian bondage and later saved from Babylonian captivity. This was not a theory; it was a historical fact, the original event and the sum of similar later events were acts of God, inexplicable and undeserved. Why God should have chosen to act in this way was a riddle. Only his mysterious mercy to his chosen people could account for it. The New Testament gives unequivocal witness to the experience of the first generation of Christians who knew that they had been saved by Christ. Specifically they had been saved from moral corruption, saved

from the fear of demons, saved from the fear of death, saved from serfdom to God into sonship to God. All this came to them through the grace of Jesus Christ.

In one form or another that experience has persisted down the Christian centuries. The members of a Salvation Army group, telling of their experience, on the street corner, give as unequivocal a witness as did the first Christians. No one has professed to know why he has been saved. His experience of the fact of grace is indubitable, but it is certainly not a moral reward for having lived a good life. Our workaday morality in a cash-and-carry world has always found it hard to accept the mystery of grace. The Pelagian heresy, which is to many persons actually an orthodoxy which they profess and practice, is man's normal protest against what seems to be the unfairness of the operations of grace. The prophecy of Isaiah speaks of "a just God and a Savior." The common man feels that the supposed saving acts of God are unjust rather than just. Why God should arbitrarily save one man and leave another unsaved is a mystery, and the tendency is to deny that he does so. The paradox is never really resolved. The awareness of the paradox led Blake to say that, first God the Father fetches us a clout on the head, and then Jesus Christ brings balm for our wounds.

Yet no thoughtful person can deny the operations of grace in his own life. He may feel himself at one time the victim of some radical injustice. But at another time he is aware of having received some mercy and blessing which he certainly has not morally deserved. So an English novelist has said that the most familiar instance of the grace of God is the love of a woman for a man who is of no account. Being truly loved is a humbling experience. It saves us from pride and self-righteousness; ultimately from contempt of ourselves and despair of ourselves. I once asked an English friend what he thought of Woodrow Wilson. He said, "I think that fifty years hence America will realize that she did not deserve so great a man as that." That is the instinctive way in which a man feels, or ought to feel, about Christ; the world did not and still does not deserve him.

We talk about the problem of evil as though it were the only problem of its kind. From a purely rational standpoint the problem of good is equally, if not more, difficult. What has humanity done to deserve the vast amount of irrational goodness which, as a tide of grace, is poured out in those "little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love" that are the "best portion of a good man's life"? It is all irrational, it may even seem unjust, but it is a fact. Most of us need to get away from

the cold, calculating, "machine-made" morals on which, as practical persons, we operate and make a larger allowance than we usually do for the miracle and mystery of grace, whether human or divine.

On the other hand we have to reckon with the fact that once the doctrine of salvation had become the sophisticated affair which it was in later Calvinism, as in a good deal of modern evangelicalism, it does raise certain questions. The reformed drunkard pounding the bass drum at the Salvation Army meeting may be sure that he has been saved from the demon rum. But if we consult the mystics, who were disciplined in these matters, we are warned against being too sure of ourselves. We are reminded that we are vulnerable and fallible and remain "saved" only by the exercise of eternal vigilance. Newman's early religious education was had at the hands of a very evangelical Anglican parson. As a result of this instruction he "considered himself predestined to salvation," delivered from the prospect of "eternal punishment" and sure of "eternal happiness." This assurance, as far as one can see, was a highly subjective matter; there was no objective way of verifying it.

In our Calvinist churches a century or more ago no youth or adult was admitted to membership unless he could give proofs of his personal and intimate experience of having been "saved." This assurance was supposedly a consequence of the operations of divine grace. The proofs convinced and satisfied the individuals, as well as a board of church deacons. Nevertheless, at this later date one is left a little perplexed by the bland confidence of the saved as to the fact of their actual salvation. Very few of the classic exponents of Calvinism doubted their own saved state. In retrospect, and in light of all that we know now about the capacity for self-deception in the human mind, one wishes that some of these persons had been a little less sure of their advance guarantee of "eternal happiness" in the view of the vast damned majority on whom they expected to look down from heaven with complacent acceptance of the workings of the divine election. One has an uneasy feeling that the processes by which these persons verify the supposed truth of their saved condition, in the ultimate rather than the immediate sense of that word, are rather too subjective. At least one ought to make such affirmations as to oneself "discreetly, and soberly." One's appraisal of one's own spiritual state ought not to become an occasion for emotional exhibitionism or subtle Pharisaism.

One final word as to Salvation. Its traditional meaning, as we have said, implies that we are saved from something. Thus, even today, we yearn to be saved from sickness, pain, untimely death, from poverty and

unhappiness in the home, from war and the rumors of wars. These desires are natural and not without their warrant. We welcome any savior who can give us assurance that he can save us, whether he be doctor, statesman, banker, or priest. Theologically most of us do not need to be saved today from the dread of eternal punishment. But we do need to be saved from the seductions of skepticism and the menace of cynicism. The modern enemy of religious assurance is not the belief that life and the world are predominantly evil, rather that they are meaningless, a "tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." That dark dread is far more widespread than most of us realize.

We need, in the terms of our own thinking, to ponder that which we are to be saved into, as well as that from which we hunger to be saved. Thomas Chalmers sounded a modern and yet wholly valid note in his historic sermon on "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection." He said that we seldom or never can overcome evil by a direct, frontal attack. Only the oblique attack can succeed, as it supplants the fact of evil by a new vision of the good. Thus, for instance, most persons in our time are now thinking little about Peace; they are wholly preoccupied with possible ways of avoiding war. But the salvation of our present world from that which it most dreads will come only as devout persons meditate deeply and constantly upon what a world at peace should be like, and thus fulfil the idea of salvation from war by a "New Affection."

From Albion Roy King

Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor, speaking to the Christ who appeared at the Inquisition, says, "Dost thou know that the ages will pass, and humanity will proclaim by the lips of their sages that there is no crime, and therefore no sin; there is only hunger?"

What word could better portray the predicament which confronts the proclamation of the Gospel of salvation today! Man has indeed found his freedom insupportable, as the Russian sage declared. "Feed men, and then ask of them virtue!" has been inscribed on the banners of the modern world, even written over the doors of the undestroyed Temple. Man's deepest needs are interpreted, not only by the rulers but by the psychologists and philosophers, as hunger; hunger is natural, and what is according to nature is good; there is no sin, only frustrations and struggle for survival. Freedom is unimportant and unwanted, even denied. Men who have learned how to turn stones to bread think they need no other salvation.

But man cannot long deny what he is. His very denial turns to anxiety, or dread, as the translators of Kierkegaard now put it; and dread reveals the very freedom which is denied. So long as there is freedom, man cannot interpret the human situation without the concept of sin. Perhaps the word is too deeply contaminated with extraneous traditions to be useful. If so, we must invent a new word to stand for the same thing.

I

Sin ought to be a simple thing to define, for all that anyone has to do is to look into his own heart and there it is. Perhaps, like a color projected by the refraction of certain light waves, the only way to define it is to point to it. That would be sufficient if a person were only trying to make the meaning clear to himself; but the trouble is that we want to make the concept meaningful to others for purposes of preaching and education. Sin is not out *there* where we can point to it, like a piece of red cloth, and define it by identification. It is hidden in the heart. One who is incapable of introspection will never find it.

What makes the matter even more difficult is that it belongs to that vast mystery which is the human soul. It does not belong to the world

ALBION ROY KING, S.T.B., Ph.D., is Professor of Ethics and Religion at Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa. He offers here a suggestion toward redefining the word "Sin."

of objective processes. It is not open to scientific investigation. One who wants to make a science of ethics can write volumes on "values" without ever once using the word or employing the concept of "sin." Rational analysis of the idea of the good (or evil) in regard to man's personal experience and social relations can keep a professor going for a whole semester's course without ever directing his thought to the problem of sin. And to aid him in the venture there is a whole shelf of textbooks which scarcely mention the idea; and if they do, it is mostly to misapply the notion by identifying it with evil acts.

On the other hand, the teacher of ethics can be caught in a quandary between that shelf of books and another which is labeled "Christian Ethics." On this shelf he will find the claim that the writers of the first shelf do not actually touch the root of the moral problem. The method here will be introspection and the effort to render consistent the meaning of a different set of terms, like sin and conversion and perfection. If the teacher belongs to the Christian tradition, he will wonder why these two approaches to ethics cannot be put together; and he may try it, but usually with confusing results.

Now this is not to say that either of these approaches is wrong, or to forget that there are areas in which they overlap. Words like faith, freedom, and good will belong to both. And both approaches to the good life are integral to religion in its true sense. The first impulse of religion is to strive for the good. This relates all religion in some way to ethics. The good must be defined. The means for its achievement must be created and transmitted in social history. This is the task of objective or rational ethics, the lawgivers, teachers, and philosophers.

Religion is often identified entirely with this moral function. God is taken as the Absolute Idea of the Good, if one is a rationalist, or the Lawgiver and Provider of Sanctions, if the emphasis is on the will. But this is only half of religion, because no matter how intelligent or how faithful one tries to be, the ethical venture never quite succeeds. Indeed, it often crumbles in a dismal wreck, like an old homestead where a vigorous pioneer family once lived, the descendants now scattered, and a tattered tenant family holding possession. Decay and death and moral tragedy are our problem of evil. No moral vision or determination can prevent sin and dread from entering the soul to block the access of man to God. Religion always meets this situation with some system and technique of salvation. There is no failure or sorrow which cannot be resolved for the Christian by repentance and faith mediated by sacramental symbols.

There are two types of error which, from my point of view, afflict the current efforts in the literature to define the nature of sin. One is the identification of sin with the acts of men which are valued as bad. Another is the listing of sin as just one of the many evils which afflict mankind. These views are both confusing and misleading. To define sin as the deliberate choice of evil in the acts of men is a kind of moralism which is the chief affliction of current ethical thought, and it calls for further discussion. To list sin as one among the evils is superficial, to say the least; for sin is probably the inward source of all outward manifestations of evil, and from ancient times has been so considered (although certain types of suffering can be interpreted rationally neither as caused by sin nor as punishment for sin). At any rate, sin is the very essence of the only final evil to afflict the soul, and that is its alienation from God.

Another traditional source of confusion since the time of St. Paul has been the effort to trace the apparent universality of sin to some kind of necessity or inevitability. That is a controversial matter into which we forbear to go. Yet it must be said that when I introspect for a meaning of sin, as I insist we must, then sin belongs to my freedom. It is interlaced with the intuition of power to make contrary choices and the sense of responsibility connected with it. The only source of our knowledge of freedom is this introspective intuition. On the other hand, most efforts to objectify moral acts and the sense of sin, to give them rational and systematic formulation, result in some sort of determinism.

Any effort to define sin must assume or postulate three things: the validity of introspective data, the reality of freedom, and the existence of God as a possible object of fellowship. Sin is a religious concept. If there is no God nor possibility of God-consciousness, there is no sin. Sin, then, is anything which obstructs my free relationship to God. This seems to confuse sin with guilt and anxiety, for both of them are obstructions; but they are also simply the sign of the sin which is their source. The solution of guilt and anxiety is to ferret out the sin and resolve it.

I doubt if, in the nature of the case, an objective definition of sin is possible. I try to point to it and identify it to myself; but how can it be identified for others? One can only give a kind of witness which will induce the introspection in others.

The suggestion which I want to make in this paper now begins to be manifest; it is that we ought to make a careful distinction between sin as a subjective experience and the objective acts which are evaluated as evil. This might not clear up all the confusion, but it would help.

The confusion on this problem has its roots in the ancient legalism of the Old Testament and the rationalism of Greek ethics, and both of these stand in sharp contrast to the doctrine of sin and salvation in St. Paul. The Hebrews had four different words for "sins," and there are six different words in the Greek New Testament with differing shades of meaning. The subjective and objective meanings are hopelessly mixed in the uses of these terms.¹ The contrast is there, not only in the difference between the Pauline letters and the ethical writings of Plato and Aristotle, but within the Old Testament. Note the contrast in atmosphere between the penitential psalms and the wisdom poetry of Job and Proverbs. In the latter, sin is folly, and morals are clearly defined in terms of acts. In the Fifty-first Psalm there is a penetrating analysis of the inwardness of sin and guilt.

The suggestion to reserve the word "sin" strictly for this subjective aspect has little warrant in the classical usage of the schools, I am well aware. It is not so delimited in St. Augustine, St. Thomas, Calvin, Luther, or Wesley. But perhaps there is a warrant for it in the confusion of current literature. This confusion is recognized by Dr. Sperry in the distinction he makes between "sins" and "Sin," although I doubt if this clears the matter. Dr. Sperry shows that the word has lost a good deal of its currency and usefulness because of its vagueness. It has been replaced with a series of words which are more specific: selfishness, lying, stealing, graft, hatred, fear, complexes, compulsions, and illness. Some of these words connote objective evils; others, conditions of the heart. Some denote a condition opposite to sin, for sin implies responsibility. Complexes, compulsions, and illness usually connote something beyond responsibility. We need the word "sin" because we need the understanding of the personal situation which the word connotes. It implies that the root of evil is in the heart. It implies responsibility. It implies that man can do something about his condition. It implies that a solution of the human situation is a right relationship to God. The traditional seven deadly sins—pride, gluttony, lust, covetousness, sloth, envy, and anger—are all words which describe conditions of the heart rather than acts.

Moral evils are the acts of men which are open to inspection and evaluation. The constant moral obligation of man is to criticize his own behavior and the activities of his society, and to work out precise methods of evaluation, and so far as possible formulate general descriptions of good and evil. This is the task of the moralist.

¹ See the article on "Sin" in the Hastings Dictionary of the Bible.

In the analysis of the moral act, there are three different points of reference. First is the consciousness of obligation and freedom of choice. This is entirely internal and subjective. It never can be observed or detected by objective methods of study, and here is where sin lies. It makes an outward move in the intent.

Outside the circle of the conscious self, there is the act. This is open to inspection. The moralists judge the act in terms of its form: does it conform to the requirements of the moral law? Beyond the act are the results, in terms of happiness, character, and social processes. These also are open to inspection. The rational moralists have usually sought to define the good and the evil in these objective terms, either by reference to the form of the act or of the results or both. Schools of ethics are named for the location of values: formalism, hedonism, or self-realization. Such evaluation is very important in the total understanding of the moral problem.

It may be assumed, however, that evil acts are a result of the sinful condition of the soul, and that the chief way to moral living and the good society is the purification of the heart. This is the message of ethical religion. But it cannot be assumed that the "good man" in terms of behavior above reproach has solved the problem of sin in his heart.

II

My conviction that we ought to restrict the word "sin" to this subjective meaning, and designate negatively evaluated acts as moral evils, has been formulated through three lines of reflection; two of these are formal studies, and one is an experience in counseling.

(1) The first came when I turned from the reading of the philosophical literature of ethics to the study of the classic literature of tragedy and the problem of evil. From the Book of Job and the Greek tragedies to Dostoevsky and Kafka, one finds himself in an atmosphere of understanding of the human situation to which the rational moralists simply do not penetrate. Plato did not have much use for the tragic poets, and the criticism of them in the *Republic* is generally recognized as superficial. Socrates and Plato tackled the problem of formulating rational definitions of justice, temperance, and courage, and produced a social ideal which has never been realized in human affairs; but they did not understand the tragic situation of the human spirit with the penetration of Aeschylus or Sophocles, or even Homer. Having no answer for tragic guilt they could not tolerate its portrayal in the theater. As Richard Kroner puts it, "They shrank from looking at the ir-

rational nature of man."² Aristotle was more appreciative of the esthetic qualities of the poets, but the ancient world waited for a St. Paul to penetrate the heart of the tragic problem and offer a way of salvation for it.

(2) The second source of this conviction about restricting the word "sin" was in a study of the Book of Job. If the poets had made this distinction in the speeches of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, there would have been some clarification of the problem in the Book. Job himself is brought to the verge of confession of sin in numerous passages; but as the argument waxes hot, the friends translate their vague insinuations into specific charges of moral evil, and Job in his defense declares his innocence and rests on his integrity. The confusion comes at this point: if one is not guilty of specific moral evils, then are we to say he cannot be judged a sinner? This, of course, is not to say that if he were a sinner it would justify as punishment all the suffering that came to him.

The equivocal position of Job may be seen by examining his reputation for patience. Job was patient, and yet he was not patient. He learned the importance of it the hard way, and his difficulty shows the necessity of it.

Impatience might be taken as a virtue in the morally sensitive man, impatience with evil and misunderstanding and the unjust lot of man. Job's impatience under the provocation of self-righteous inquisitors is a normal reaction under stress, and few will fail to sympathize with him. Yet it is self-destructive and sinful. It is a turning of the soul away from God, to use St. Thomas' definition of mortal sin. In the face of the evil of existence and the helplessness of man, patience is necessary to mental balance. The development of that virtue is one of the demands of the spirit in the struggle for survival.

But patience comes only from a firm faith in God. So long as Job could say, "Yahweh gave, and Yahweh hath taken away; blessed be the name of Yahweh," he was a patient man. When his faith began to waver in the long dark night of the soul, he lost his patience. It was not restored until the light began to shine through the terror of the whirlwind.

Job is not convicted of the kind of self-interest which Satan's sneer implies. His piety and morality are not a calculated bid for the prosperity which came to him. But he does not escape the kind of sinful pride which afflicts the successful man and which led Jesus to assert the virtual impossibility for a rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven. His success is certain proof to him that he is virtuous. In a crisis such a person is offended at scrutiny of his moral integrity. One does not need to be rich, for that

² Kroner, R., *The Primacy of Faith*, The Macmillan Company, 1943, p. 80.

matter; all that is needed is a situation where some project of the good life is frustrated. "Pride is the inordinate appetite of excellence," says St. Thomas. At the point of crisis in pursuit of excellence, pride exhibits itself as resentment.

When Job's friends finally list their catalogue of specific evils against Job, the debate has degenerated into stiff-necked stubbornness. They are too deeply involved in the same sort of worldly pride to be able to see Job's situation clearly. Yet Job's stout denial and assertions of integrity are fraught with a deep anxiety. Proud man in his most confident assertions of integrity is caught in the sense of dread, and this dread is the quality which lends to every assertion of certainty a feeling of uncertainty and to every protestation of innocence a feeling of guilt.

The ethical problem of the Book of Job is complicated by this identification of sin with acts of moral turpitude. It is significant that modern rationalist interpretations of the book tend to pare the document down to the symposium, and to interpret Job's repentance as an impotent collapse before a thunderous display of the Absolute. But even though they may be judged as later additions to the earlier poems, the speeches of Elihu and the theophany make significant contributions to the religious probing of the depths of the human heart.

(3) My attention was first called to the paradoxical situation occasioned by the confusion of sin with moral evil by observations within meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. The members of that interesting modern program for dealing with a dramatic form of evil have a slogan which they preach in every public utterance: "Alcoholism is a disease." They go to the problem drinker with the word: "Brother, you are a sick man; you are not a sinner nor a moral leper, you have an allergy; you need help." But when they have brought the brother along to the meeting, except for cleaning him up and giving him medication if needed, they treat his condition in anything but the manner of the physician. Immediately they set up the meeting to throw around him all the subtle social stimuli which will induce a mood of confession and repentance and a reaching out for a higher power to help him. Step number one: "We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable." Step number two: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." Step number three: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*." And on through eleven steps they take the route which from ancient times has been the procedure for soul cleansing and reordering of life. Step number twelve

takes them out into an evangelical campaign to carry the good news to others in trouble.

How is this program achieved? Not by the lashing of the victim with a catalogue of his sins and wickedness! It is by the testimony and witness of the brothers who have been through the mill, and the friendly fellowship of those who have found the faith, first in the power greater than themselves, and then in themselves.

Alcoholism is a disease! The alcoholic is a sinner! So are the rest of us for that matter. But therein lies the paradox. The absurdity is for anyone to conclude that because he is ill, he is not then a sinner. Such a popular construction of the saying shows the confusion which exists among us on the doctrine of sin. Sin is not just an error; it is not simply a maladjustment, even though the acts of men which carry out a sinful intent may be defined objectively as error or lack of adjustment. Sin is a condition of the soul, and only a soul therapy self-applied will meet the condition.

Even more absurd and probably more common is a subtle kind of self-righteousness which afflicts us when we identify drunkenness or any of the other vile evils directly with sin. In attitude if not in verbal conclusion we assume that we have solved the problem of sin when we have controlled or inhibited these vices. Missing the inwardness of sin we fall into one of its worst forms. The more we scorn the sinful bums the deeper we fall into sinful pride that we are not one of them. It is easy to learn to say, "Except for the grace of God there am I." It is very difficult really to feel the truth of it.

The self-application of the remedy needs to be stressed. Physicians, counselors, and even preachers must treat the man in trouble as a sick man. They cannot treat the sin directly, even though they can objectively evaluate the evil. Preachers and counselors, and perhaps even physicians, ought to be expert in throwing around the person in trouble the kind of influences which will lead him, as does Alcoholics Anonymous, to examine himself and reach out for the social and divine resources to help him. They must remember first of all that this is done through a confessional attitude on their own part. Any assumption of perfection defeats the redemptive process.

If we should follow this suggestion of reserving the word for the subjective reality and employ more objective terms to designate the evaluation of moral acts, would it make any difference in our current religious life?

For one thing, I suggest that it might help to maintain a better balance between the humanists and the neo-orthodox, and keep the ship of the church on a more even keel. First one and then the other is always rocking the boat. On one side religion is identified with a superficial moralism; it is a matter of "being good," which *is* good, except that always the good is dragged down to a level where it ceases to be "the good." It is hard to move into Plato's heaven and stay there. On the other hand, the neo-orthodox are always endangering the ship in the waters of Antinomianism.

There are always two kinds of Pharisees and hypocrites: those who have kept the law, so they cannot *be* wrong; and those who have made their hearts right with God, so they cannot *do* wrong. Both are wrong!

The only answer seems to demand that we hold to both horns of the paradox. No matter how good a man may become, he always has a problem of sin to cure. On the other hand, the solution of sin by faith never seems quite to solve the problem of being good in an objective sense. We must tackle the task of moral evaluations in the most objective manner, and then confront the problem of sin in the only way it can be resolved. Both are important, but they should not be confused.

III

So much for the theoretical side of the question; now for a more practical angle. Mrs. Edith Hunter wrote a very disturbing article for all religious educators, "Neo-Orthodoxy Goes to Kindergarten," which was published in *RELIGION IN LIFE*,³ in which she exhibits the conflict in one of its most disturbing forms. She discusses the chaos which results from the injection of neo-orthodox doctrines into the curriculum and literature of religious education. In the recent past a humanist and naturalist point of view has certainly informed our educational procedure with its objective view of the child and treatment of him. There is little indication that educators will throw out the obvious benefits and go back to an older orthodoxy which treated the child as by nature a son of Belial. Yet it would be most unreal to conclude that objective treatment can leave sin out of account. The revived orthodoxy has something important to say, but where shall it be injected into the curriculum?

To treat the kindergarten child as though his acts were sins would certainly be wrong, and to condemn the fourteen-year-old's behavior as sinful seems to me to be mistaken. I doubt if anybody, fourteen-year-old or

³ Winter, 1950-51, pp. 3ff.

forty-year-old, should ever be condemned by another as a sinner. No one ever knows who is a sinner except the man who knows himself to be a sinner. But the child and the boy and the man should always be led to make a calm evaluation of his own behavior as good or bad. The sense of sin can be taken for granted as soon as the child has come to full self-consciousness. Then he must be shown what repentance is and what the grace of God means.

The real failure in the current situation is not that God is identified with nature, or that the transcendent majesty of God is unrecognized. It is that every potential repentant sinner who comes into the church or the church school is confronted with self-righteous moralizing about contemporary evils (usually called "sins" in the church), and very seldom is he introduced to anyone in the mood of confession and repentance. It would be the strangest kind of experience for either an adolescent or a middle-ager to find himself in a church in the grip of the kind of atmosphere which works miracles in the A. A. meeting.

Whenever any person occupies the position of teacher, he must function on the faith of Socrates that knowledge is virtue; and unless he thoroughly believes it, he is unfitted for the task. But he certainly is not wise if he thinks that the task of religion is accomplished in the classroom. His attitude in that case is as unwise as Plato's condemnation of the tragic poets.

There must be a sanctuary, and sacraments or a confessional or a prayer and testimony meeting or a cell group, where the soul takes an inventory and is confronted with the judgment and the mercy of God.

From Harris Franklin Rall

I

No theme could be more timely for our day than that of this symposium, and not only for the preacher and the theologian. It is faced by psychologist and psychiatrist, dealing not only with the "mental" cases which are crowding hospitals and sanitariums, but with multitudes outside whose concern is attested by the sale of popular works in this field. What is the matter with man, they are asking, and how can he be helped?

Even more acute are the problems which face us in the world of human relations, economic, political, and international. We are seeing ever more clearly the problems of society. We have long realized that "Every human being is a problem in search of a solution";¹ now we know that back of all our social questions, including war, we face the same problem of man, of human nature and attitudes.

With this goes the search for salvation. The religious term is not commonly used, but the quest is the same. Salvation means help in overcoming evil and in attaining the good, a help that is more than human effort. Thoughtful men are inquiring whether there is such help. Mankind has made unparalleled advance in the last century in scientific knowledge and in the techniques by which we apply that knowledge to further our comfort and pleasure. And we have moved fast in the field of organization: social, economic, political, and now international. What an advance there is in the plan of a United Nations Assembly, the idea of a parliament of man, a federation of the world, which has moved from a poet's dream to actual achievement!

But is the U. N. A. an achievement or simply a goal? Is democracy an attainment or an ideal? Let us recognize gratefully the achievement, here and at other points, but let us face the fact of constant failure that has gone with advance: nations bound together yet fighting each other, science and technology too often used for selfish advantage, for exploitation of men and of backward peoples, and for modern war with its mass destruction. Meanwhile great areas of the world's population are living under conditions of hunger and helplessness which have made a fertile seedbed

¹ Montague, Ashley, *On Being Human*. New York: Henry Schuman, 1950.

HARRIS FRANKLIN RALL, Ph.D., LL.D., is Professor Emeritus of Systematic Theology at Garrett Biblical Institute, Northwestern University Campus, Evanston, Illinois. He offers a systematic discussion of both sin and salvation.

for revolution and the specious promises of salvation brought by fascism and communism.

So men are looking for salvation in the social field also. Nor is this search simply rooted in the despair of the masses. Thoughtful leaders are realizing that it will take more than science, technical advance, and social organization, even on a world scale, to deliver us from threatening evil and bring us to the desired goal. We are facing a moral-spiritual problem; there must be a moral-spiritual deliverance. The basic problems are those of religion: evil to be overcome and the good to be achieved—the problems of sin and salvation.

Christianity offers an answer to this problem. It is the gospel, the good news of God and his way of overcoming evil and gaining the good. God and his gracious purpose, man with his sin and his possibilities as the creature made in God's image, salvation as God's work in giving men life—these are our great themes. The church faces no greater task today than to make clear its message at this point, its diagnosis of man's ills, its doctrine of salvation.

It must be confessed that the church as a whole has not been living up to this obligation. Sometimes its conception has been too narrow. In some bodies there has been wanting an understanding of the basic nature of salvation as personal-ethical, not sacramentarian or merely mystical. Within Protestantism the church has been too much inclined to use traditional terms worn smooth by usage, failing to challenge men and bring home their vital meaning. The wide social areas have been largely neglected, or have been seen only as a place for God's demand rather than as equally a sphere for God's saving work. Neo-orthodoxy has done service in calling for social action, but it has not seen the historical-social world as a place of God's saving work and has tended to promote an attitude of pessimism here.

If the church is to meet the challenge of our time with its gospel of salvation, it must face a double task. First, it must know the world in which it lives, with an understanding of individual and social problems. Second, it must study afresh the Christian message and interpret that message to the men of today in language that will be understandable and with a content that is meaningful and vital. The gospel which the church has to preach is at once divine revelation and human interpretation. It was not handed down in fixed form or in authoritative doctrines. God's revelation is one of deeds, not of words. Ours is the living God, known through

his mighty works. Revelation and redemption are one work. We find this revealing-redeeming work in Israel. We see its supreme deed in Christ. Here, as always, the deed came first. It did not end with Christ's death. His living presence and power in the early church, the gift of the Spirit, the new men and the new fellowship in which they were joined, this was the continuing work of God in redemption.

It was the task of the early church to interpret this work. Its meaning was not discerned at once nor equally by all. From the beginning it proclaimed a salvation from God through Christ, but it saw that salvation as something yet to come, when Christ should return and establish his kingdom. The larger understanding came through the tuition of experience: the gift of the Spirit as a transforming power, the new life which was theirs, the new fellowship of the church, and the living presence of Christ in their midst. The New Testament brings us a record of great events but it is more than history. It presents great truths but it is not a system of theology. It is an interpretation of these events as the good news of God's saving purpose seen in Christ, wrought out by his Spirit, realized in Christian experience and the Christian church.

The task of interpretation is still with us. Christ remains for us basic as the revelation of God's will and way for man's salvation, but our human interpretations are not absolute or final and our God is the living God whose work of revelation and redemption still goes on in men, in the church, in history. The basic nature and needs of man remain the same but his life is more complex. Historical, social, and psychological study has added to our knowledge of man and his predicament. We have had new revelations of the depth and scope and power of evil. So we ask the questions again for our day: What is the meaning of sin as the root evil of man? What is the meaning of salvation in relation to the world of our day? Is it social as well as individual? Has it any relation to history? What is the meaning of God's saving help for man?

II

The problem of mankind is man, and the root of this problem is *sin*. There are other and great evils: ignorance, poverty, hunger, illness of body and mind. But even with these the chief cause, and the chief obstacle to their overcoming, is man's sin.

"Sin" is an ethical term. It is conscious wrong doing and wrong being. It is not native depravity, a race heritage with which we are born. It is

not impersonal. It is true that we must recognize the significance of heredity. Even more important is the social heritage into which we are born, the world of ideas, ideals, practices and institutions which form the atmosphere in which we live. But sin does not appear until, with some consciousness of its meaning, we conform to what is evil and reject what is good. So as to the biological-psychological heritage, the native drives which belong to us as human beings. Here again the summons comes to choose or reject, to rule these in the light of the highest and by the help of the Most High. Sin comes with the decision.

1. *Sin is disobedience.* It is man proving false to himself, false to God. The very essence of human life, that which makes us men, is that we alone are dwellers in two worlds, that which is and that which is to be. Man is not made man by his intelligence or skills, his science or his mastery of nature, but by the challenge of a higher world, and by his power to choose or refuse its summons.

2. God sums up for us the deepest meaning of that world. He is the high good which calls to us. He brings the revelation of what life should be. He offers the aid for reaching that life. *Sin is more than wrongdoing; it is man's No to God.* Man may not be conscious of the full meaning of his choice. There may be no clear awareness that God is speaking. But whenever he discerns what is true and right and good, when he recognizes this as coming with the right to command, then, whether he uses the name or not, he has some awareness of God. Then the refusal is his No to God, it is sin.

Sin is rarely the deliberate conscious choice which says, "Evil, be thou my good." But that is its meaning in essence and it is our task to bring out that meaning and summon man to the great decision. Here we see the sin that is so common among "good people": the sin of indifference and unconcern in the face of evils to be combated and good to be chosen, the refusal to share the life of service in God's great purpose for the world. "And the people stood beholding," says the evangelist; they, and not merely Roman ruler and Jewish leaders, were guilty in the death of Jesus.

3. *Sin is selfishness.* That is what lies back of the refusal of obedience or loyalty. That is the clear opposite of what Jesus declared to be God's supreme demand, "Thou shalt love." It is found in the pride which sets self up against God, but it goes deeper and is more inclusive. The common apathy and indifference, the lives of glutton and drunkard and libertine, exhibit sin, but hardly the sin of pride where man "seeks to raise his con-

tingent existence to unconditional significance" or to put himself in the place of God.²

The selfishness may be a calculated wickedness, accepting any evil if it serves the selfish end. Or it may be the sin of those "wretched souls" whom Dante found shut out alike from hell and heaven,

who lived
Without praise or blame, with that ill band
Of angels mixed, who nor rebellious proved
Nor yet were true to God, but for themselves
Were only.³

4. *Sin is want of faith, more specifically the refusal of faith.* The common English translation of *apistia* as unbelief does not wholly make clear its meaning. Faith is more than a matter of beliefs. True, it involves an inner conviction; but this is no mere matter of logical proof or sensible evidence. The decisive matter is man's response, or want of it, when he is confronted by a higher good and a higher power and is summoned to surrender himself in trust and obedience. Then faith is the Yes which opens the way to the higher life, the Yes to God. The No means that a man is unfaithful to his own highest insights and to God. This is the sin of unbelief, the great refusal.

5. Sin is more than a matter of sins, of particular wrong deeds. It is a *basic attitude or spirit* and the character which results from this. The casual choice becomes the life habit. The habit issues in character. Evil becomes at last the man himself and the power which rules his life. Now the man is no longer free. This is what Paul meant when he wrote of being "captive to the law of sin which dwells in my members."

6. *Sin is social:* it pertains to the group as well as the individual. As man's highest life is attained in fellowship, so it is in the associated life that evil becomes most powerful and pervasive. God has his plan for that life, but the group may refuse God's plan, as may the individual. In both cases it is sin.

Such is Christianity's diagnosis of the root of man's ills. The problem is moral, not material. It is refusal of loyalty to the right and true and good. But this moral problem, in its final meaning, is religious: man's lack of faith in the Power that is good, his refusal to put his trust in this

² Reinhold Niebuhr. So with Barth and his use of Gen. 3:5 as the key text for the understanding of sin: "Ye shall be as God," or "as gods."

³ *The Divine Comedy*, Canto I. H. F. Cary's translation.

God and to give him supreme loyalty, his choice of the self-centered life. This is sin. Sin is a religious term. In a word, sin is wrong doing and wrong being as seen in the light of God.

III

Salvation may be broadly defined as *deliverance from evil and the gift of good by a power that is greater than ourselves*. In this sense men are seeking for salvation everywhere today, though the term is not used. Everywhere would-be saviors are offering themselves to man with their plans of individual or social salvation. What is unique in Christianity is not the idea of salvation but its declaration as to the evil from which we need deliverance, the good or goal which is proffered, the God who is our deliverer, and the way in which God saves. There is a simplicity in the Christian way; even a child may take it. To know the God of love, our Father; to trust him and follow his way: this is to be a child of God, this is to be saved. But to know the full meaning of this salvation in its depth and scope will be our never-finished task.

For evangelical Christianity the Pauline message is still central. *Salvation is first of all for the individual*. The Christian gospel speaks to the man who is conscious of his sin, who knows the division within and the need of wholeness and peace, who seeks a truer and richer life and knows his need of help. Its great words are grace, faith, life. Grace is the word for God, the God of free forgiveness who seeks us, receives us, and gives himself to us in a fellowship of love and daily help. Faith is the word for man's response. Its object is not the church, nor a sum of doctrine, but God. It is the answer of person to Person. It is not one deed but a continuing attitude of life. It is the open door through which God and his help can enter.

"Life" is the third word, life as the gift of God, not simply his demand. This is the great word of the Fourth Gospel; it is equally the concern of Paul. To a church which thought of salvation as in the future, as the deed by which the returning Christ was to overcome evil and establish his rule, Paul made clear the reality of a present salvation, a life given to men here and now.

There is special need today for renewed emphasis on this creative aspect of salvation. True, there will always be need of deliverance, and social ills are not the only ones. Consider the place we have given to psychiatry and psychoanalysis, the number of mental patients in hospitals

and special institutions, the widespread mood of worry, anxiety, and fear, the sense of frustration, the lives that lack inner unity and peace. But all this points to the positive side, the need of a life that is whole and rich and strong, that has freedom and peace, that is lived in enriching fellowship, in right relation to God and fellow men.

We need more here than abstract discussions of repentance, faith, grace, and regeneration. We must make clear and definite the rich life which the gospel offers and the way of God for the attainment of that life. Salvation means wholeness and fullness of life—consider the common root meaning of such words as healing, health, wholeness, holiness. A man may turn to God in one act of decision, but this fullness of life is given only in the ongoing process of living.

This life has its divine order, its laws of attainment. There is the requirement of supreme devotion and total trust, a trust that cuts the roots of worry and fear, a devotion which destroys inner division and brings oneness. There is the way of fellowship with God in reading, meditation, private prayer, common worship, the service of men. There is the way of fellowship with men found in the intimate association of home and friendship. There is the fellowship of faith, worship, love, and service which is found in the church. These are not merely spheres of duty; they are means of grace, means by which God gives us his life and makes us over. They, too, belong to the doctrine of salvation.

In setting forth the way of salvation, three great words need to be made clear: Christ, the Word, and the Spirit. The church has been much concerned to set forth a doctrine of Holy Scripture, of the person of Christ, of the Spirit. It has not sufficiently dealt with their meaning for man's salvation. So its doctrines have tended to become abstract, sometimes philosophical, sometimes dogmatic, but with too little meaning for the Christian man and his life.

(1) The beginning of salvation is when God speaks to man. That is the true meaning of the Word. It comes to us through Scripture, but we cannot simply equate it with the Bible. Its supreme expression is in Christ, who is for us *the* Word. The Bible is the record of how God has spoken to men in the past but it becomes a living word only as God speaks to us through it today.

(2) We need to make plain how Christ saves. Too much "gospel preaching" today is a mere iteration of phrases. The leader of one of our youth movements once illustrated what it meant to accept Christ: "I offer

you a dollar; you take it, it is yours. I offer you Christ: you take him, you are saved." These are simply words unless we really make plain what it means to take Christ as Lord and Savior. Yes, it is simple to turn and follow Christ as once the disciples did, but a whole lifetime is not enough to learn its meaning. How does Christ save? He is the word that voices alike judgment and mercy. He is the truth: we see in him the meaning of God and the world and life. In him is life, the life that God gives us, the life that we are to live.

(3) We need to make clear, not to a few saints and mystics but to all men in all their need, the meaning of the indwelling Spirit in God's way of saving. We say "Holy Spirit" because this is the Spirit of the transcendent God, the Infinite and Holy One. We say "indwelling Spirit" because this is no mere gift or power handed down from above but is God giving himself to dwell in men and be their life. The Spirit is God present and working in all the world's life.

IV

Salvation is social as well as individual. It is *historical*, not merely the deed of the moment but a work that God is carrying out through the ages.

At no place does faith face a greater challenge than here. History seems like an endless succession of advance and failure, of the rise and fall of civilizations, of evils overcome to be succeeded by other and often greater evils. Never was mankind bound so closely together as today, and never was strife so general and war so terrible. "Where is now your God?" men ask.

Within the church opinions are divided. For Rome, the Church is the answer, and many Protestants would hold the same though with difference as to meaning. They see God's purpose as the creation and preservation of his Church and its final triumph, if not on earth then in heaven. Apocalypticism, in its current premillennial form, denies meaning to history. In his inscrutable decree God has given this age to the forces of evil except for the salvation of his saints: salvation will come by his irresistible might when this age has ended. Neo-orthodoxy sees in our social order a summons to moral action, but not the sphere for God's redemptive work; that seems ruled out by its conception of man and his sin. Most common is either the neglect of the problem or a humanistic-moralistic optimism, with a social gospel which is in fact social ethics.

We need the emphasis on a Christian social ethic. We must see our gospel whole and face its demands. Our God is the God of all life; religion is not merely individual. We must offer all life to God. His will for that life is found in the spirit of Christ. The church must face what it means for the relations of races and nations and industry, and must proclaim this courageously. But we need to ask the other question, too. Is there saving help here as well as moral demand? Is God at work in our social order? Can we hold the old prophetic faith that he is the God of the nations and at work in history for man's redemption?

First of all we must see clearly that this social-historical salvation is not a thing apart. Individual and social form a whole. Neither of the extremes of individualism or collectivism belongs to Christianity. The individual is saved in the social relations of home and church and the general social life; God works in and through them all. But the individual is not lost in the social group; his personality remains sacred as does his life with God. And the group life cannot achieve its goal without that which the individuals bring of vision and religious experience, of character and devotion.

The Christian view of salvation in history (our philosophy of history) is determined by three considerations, and first by our conception of God.

(1) God is the God of all life, of time as well as of eternity, of the social order as well as individual life. He is at work in all life, sustaining, judging, saving. And his power over all is directed by his love for all.

(2) The purpose of God is his coming kingdom. That means at once the rule of God and the good of man. God's rule is no compulsion of power, no mere submission of the subject. It is the sway of his spirit, of truth and love and righteousness. "In his will is our peace," said Dante. We add: In his will is every good, is the fulfillment of our highest life. "Thy kingdom come" is the prayer that sums up all prayers. So we think of God's purpose in history as that of a new and redeemed humanity, a people of God, united in a household of faith and love and mutual service.

(3) The way of God is determined by his goal. The goal is ethical; the way must be that of growing insight, of free obedience to his truth, of conflict with evil, of the transformation alike of the individual and the associated life of man. It is a long, hard way, but no other way is possible for such a goal. And God is with man on this way. He is present as light-giving and life-giving Spirit. He is here as a togethering power, uniting men in home and church and other fellowships, working against selfish-

ness and divisions and conflicts by his Spirit of love. He is at work as ongoing judgment, the unchanging order within which history moves, the bounds set to evil, the rule of certain consequences bringing empires of evil to naught, a judgment in which love works and in which we see God "smiting and healing."

All this is process; what may we hope for as the end? That concerns the kingdom of God on earth and in heaven. We have no supernaturally communicated program of future events. Our hope is in God: "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." We believe that truth is stronger than error, that love is mightier than selfishness, and justice and freedom than oppression. But the times and seasons we leave with God, and we know that perfection does not belong to the human and finite. And as we trust God's goodness and power for earth, so for the life beyond.

From Joseph Haroutunian

I

Recent theology has failed to make the Christian doctrine of sin persuasive. In spite of the evils in our world, and our own uneasy consciences, it is well-nigh impossible to believe that we are involved in sin against God. Neo-orthodox writing, with its elaborate disquisitions on sin, has made us more "realistic" and readier to admit our involvement in social evil. But it has failed to induce a conviction of sin before God. There seems to be no evil, or argument, which can persuade us that wrongdoing is sin, an "infinite evil" which exposes us to the just condemnation of God. One has reason to believe that even those who have written eloquently on human sinfulness are impressed more by the wickedness of men than by the goodness of God which is presupposed by the doctrine of sin.

The new difficulty with regard to this doctrine is that God's claim to our worship and obedience is no longer self-evident. The "ground of being" no longer inspires our loyalty and honor, because being is no longer obviously a blessing. The natural piety of man, his gratitude for life and good, is all but canceled by a new awareness of the precariousness of life and good alike. The same love of life and good which inspires piety makes us to turn against God because we anticipate the ultimate loss of both in death. The same "first cause" gives life and takes it away. Hence one who loves life is driven to enmity and rebellion against "God." There is an elemental bitterness in being threatened with nonbeing, and this bitterness persuades the creature that the Creator has no claim upon his loyalty. Under the circumstances, neither the goodness of God nor the justice of God is impressive. On the contrary, when the creature faces extinction, he feels that the source of his being is neither good nor just; whence it follows that there is no sin against God.

The history of religion provides us with ample evidence that man's love for being and Being, for life and the Source of life, has always suffered a reversal into enmity. The prevalence of magic, superstition, idolatry in the world; the motifs of fear and legalism in the several religions of mankind; universal attempts at overcoming individuality by union with some transcendent and unchangeable reality: all these point to man's alienation from his existence because of a chronic anxiety about his life. This same

JOSEPH HAROUTUNIAN, Ph.D., D.D., is Professor of Systematic Theology at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois. He points to the Resurrection as the decisive factor in our faith.

anxiety has led men to believe that the Evil One rules this world; or that the world has suffered a mysterious intrusion of evil; or that the world is by nature evil. Where men have held on to the doctrine of a good Creator, as in the Hebrew religion, they have nevertheless rebelled against God all their years and written their history as one of backsliding and disobedience. In short, there is a deep-seated restiveness in the human soul; and this restiveness is produced by time and alteration which point to the ultimate frustration of being by nonbeing.

The new in the situation of the Western man is that he has come to be possessed of a deep conviction that he has no future. This is not the place for analyzing the reasons for this hopelessness. Science, technology, philosophy, art and literature, and politics have contributed to the making of a mind which is "without hope in the world." It is instinctive for this mind to repudiate the hope that in the controversy between life and death the last word belongs to life. The business of living is conducted with the settled certainty that the destiny of individual life is annihilation. Indeed, men are usually too busy with their pursuit of goods to occupy themselves with the "problem of destiny." Their lives are nonetheless without hope, and their hopelessness qualifies their existence so as to confuse being's love of being and his joy in it. Love is corrupted with enmity and joy with bitterness. A deep and diffuse and persistent resentment has taken possession of the human soul; it has alienated man from God, from himself, and from his fellow men.

It is true that not everybody feels this resentment against God. Some feel it more, others feel it less. Many have become numb with despair and live well without hope. But in any case, it has become impossible for this generation to take sin seriously. "Guilty feelings" are of course widespread, and no one has difficulty in observing wickedness in others. Everywhere men excuse themselves and judge others. But all this has no relation to God. The sentiment of guilt is recognized as a social product, and doctors do their best to save people from it. It is now well known that everyone is at bottom innocent and his misdeeds are due to biological and social causes. Not even the most confirmed moralists can escape the suspicion that the wicked are generally blameless and that there are scientific ways and means of turning bad people into good people. Modern psychotherapy has made a great deal of progress in the diagnosis and cure of "guilt complex." It is not inconceivable that in time we should be able to get rid of the miserable thing altogether and enable men to live without sorrow, godly or otherwise. There is no such thing, they tell us, as rebel-

lion against God or transgression of his law. Rebellion, when it occurs, is due to maladjustment and transgression is only ignorance, which is a thing to be not blamed but removed.

II

The subject of "sin and salvation" belongs within the context of a theological tradition which is alien to the modern mind. The orthodox doctrine of sin as culpability before God, which has been revived and stated with a new violence in our time, is based upon the doctrine of God's moral perfection as the Creator of a good and perfect world, and the doctrine of man's responsibility to pay such a God the honor and obedience which are his due. Such was the basis of Anselm's theory of the atonement which became normative for Western orthodoxy. It was obvious and uncontested that when man withheld the honor and obedience which he owed by nature and reason to God, he committed a crime which was as grave as God is gracious, in fact an infinite crime deserving of infinite punishment. It was for this reason, so the theory went, that none other than God, the Son, could have satisfied God's justice, or expiated man's crime of disobedience. This God did, by taking on human nature and by his death on the Cross. The God-Man obeyed for us, and satisfied the justice of God. His righteousness was imputed to others and the sinful creature was restored to right relationship to his Creator.

The proponents of the modern nonorthodox theories of the atonement, in spite of their well-known objections to the orthodox "plan of salvation," have retained the basic assumption of the love and goodness of God. They have explained the Cross as the supreme manifestation of Divine love, or a vicarious sacrifice, intended not to satisfy God's justice but to operate as a rectifying influence upon the selfishness and self-seeking of man. Here, the goodness of God toward man, separated from the orthodox doctrine of his regard for himself and his honor, is made the uncomplicated essence of his perfection. We are presented with a Deity whose single-minded love toward us is sufficient inducement that we eschew evil and do good. Here also, as in orthodoxy, the goodness of the Creator is the presupposition of the doctrine of "sin and salvation."

The traditional theories of the atonement, orthodox and nonorthodox, are no longer convincing because the Creator's claim to man's gratitude is no longer obvious. It is not obvious that life is good, and that its Author deserves our thankfulness. Being, the love of being, and the love of God, are inseparable one from another. Being is necessarily a being's first love, for all love presupposes being. God is loved as the Source of

being, as the Creator who maintains being. Hence love for God is inseparable from hope for life, for the continuation of the creature's existence. When a man becomes convinced that he must cease to be, he lives without hope. Without hope, love is overwhelmed by despair, and the creature's regard for the Creator is confused if not cancelled. There is no joy without hope; no thankfulness without joy; no responsibility without thankfulness; and no sin without responsibility. If no sin, there is no need for salvation from sin. The man of this generation has no hope for his life. Even if he be religious and have hope of a sort, his hope is so lifeless that he does not live by it. Where there is no "living hope," there is no knowledge of God as the Father. Hence, we are confronted with a total collapse of the traditional scheme of "sin and salvation," orthodox, liberal, or even neo-orthodox.

For instance, Brunner's discussion of the atonement, in *The Mediator*, for all its power and excellence, does not carry conviction. He interprets the work of Christ as the removal of Divine wrath which stands between God and the sinner. He assumes that God deserves man's faith and obedience; that man who rebels against God deserves God's wrath; that God is faithful and man faithless. But these are assumptions which are alien to the hopeless mind of the modern man. God's case against man is by no means clear, and neither is the need for atonement. D. M. Baillie's *God Was in Christ* is, if anything, less "interesting." His description of a Man, who by God's grace, crowned his obedience to God with his death, presupposes God's right to such obedience, which has become questionable. The human perfection of Jesus Christ does not mean the perfect goodness of God. Indeed, the Cross of Christ is decisive evidence that the Creator is one who will not or cannot uphold the life which is the creature's blessing. The traditional theories of the atonement, whether authorized or revised, presuppose the Creator's claim upon the creature's fidelity and subservience. The precarious life of man does not substantiate such a claim. Without this claim there is no sin in the biblical sense, and the "Christian scheme of salvation" is both unwanted and unnecessary.

The modern man's inability to take a serious view of his culpability before God is evident in the "liberal" views of sin which are nowadays more maligned than understood. Liberal theologians have been incapable of being impressed by the orthodox doctrine that sin is a violation of God's Person and honor. It has appeared to them that a God who demands obedience as a debt to himself and insists upon receiving "satisfaction" when this debt is not paid, is less than the "loving Father" of the Christian faith.

They have interpreted sin not as a violation of Divine right but as a failure to conform to God's love and purpose which have their end in an ideal of a "community of love" as yet partially realized. Sin is not so much against the ground of being as against an ideal which transcends individual beings as a "far-off divine event." God's claim to man's obedience is grounded not in himself as the Creator but in his purpose which is "the good Society." The good transcends God as well as man, as their common purpose, and is the proper ground of man's love for God. It is defined not by the life of the creature but by a quality of social relations. Hence it is not the ground of being but an ideal good which claims man's ultimate and absolute loyalty. What makes "sin" serious is failure to contribute to the coming of "the kingdom of God" rather than the creature's alienation from the Creator.

We are not concerned with the rightness or wrongness of such an interpretation of sin. What concerns us is that it is the work of the modern mind which is instinctively indifferent to the Creator's claim upon the creature's love and loyalty. Belief in "future life" is a part of modern "liberal" faith; but it is a minor part and insufficient to establish man's love for life and its Giver.

III

The vehemence, not to say intemperance, of the neo-orthodox efforts to revive the Christian doctrine of sin is further evidence of our thesis. So is the neo-orthodox insistence that sin has meaning only in the context of the "biblical faith," and decisively in the shadow of the Cross. The Cross has once again become prominent in Christian theology as revelation of the universal sinfulness of mankind. Neo-orthodox writers have criticized orthodoxy and liberalism alike for expounding the Christian doctrine of sin independently of the atoning death of Jesus Christ. However, they agree with both, especially with orthodoxy, in describing the crucifixion of Jesus as that which convicts man of sin and constrains him to acknowledge the justice of God in his condemnation. It is obvious to them that the death of Jesus establishes once for all God's case against man and justifies beyond the possibility of cavil not only his wrath but also its consequences in the miseries of our world.

Now, all this is quite impressive as a protest against unbiblical treatments of sin in modern Christianity. It makes a proper and necessary distinction between sin and "moral imperfection" which does not belong in the context of the Christian faith. It reminds us once again of the "severity" of God and of the Christian conviction that Christ died for as

well as by our sin. But, the death of Jesus as such does not reveal the justice of God. There is no evidence in the Gospels that those who witnessed the death of Jesus, either as his enemies or as his friends, saw in it an act of God, either in judgment or in redemption. It may well be that the priests and Romans who disposed of him congratulated themselves for having avoided a probably serious disturbance in a crowded and restless city. The "multitudes" had in the mad human way enjoyed the smell of blood and satisfied man's bitter need to be cruel toward a fellow man. The friends of Jesus were overwhelmed and made desolate by the death of One who was to them faith, love, and hope. At the Cross, God did not reveal himself to them, either as just or as loving. On the contrary, he hid himself in an impenetrable darkness, having let wicked men destroy their Friend and dashed to pieces their expectation of the Kingdom of Heaven preached and promised by the Man of God.

The death of Jesus was not to his friends (and who is not a friend of Jesus?) a revelation of their sin, or the atonement for it. It was not the revelation of the justice of God, or of the love of God. It did not reveal him as Creator, or Preserver, or Savior. It did not establish, on the contrary it removed, God's claim upon their faith in him as Father. The Cross was an immediate and utterly convincing revelation, a revelation that pierced the heart as with a sword, of the reign of death and evil in this world. God did turn over the Son of Man to evildoers and he did allow death to overwhelm life in the person of his Servant. Nobody seems to have suffered contrition through the "work of Christ," except a betrayer and a thief. But neither Judas nor the thief saw in the crucifixion any evidence of God's justice and love, nor did anybody else. We can find no atonement in the Cross as such; on the contrary, it at once expresses and confirms man's alienation from God. This is the reason for the perennial failure of the traditional "theories of the atonement" to show how the Cross satisfied God's justice, or how it reconciled man with God, or how it revealed the love of God the Father.

IV

It is through the Resurrection, and through it alone, that the friends of Jesus could find in the Cross anything but frustration and despair. It was the Resurrection faith first of all that transformed a handful of hopeless and panicky men into men of confidence and courage; that convinced them of God's presence and power in this world, and of his goodness toward Jesus first and toward the sons of man secondly. When Jesus rose

from the dead, a new joy entered the world, a new faith in God as the Lord of life and death, a new trust in him as the God of righteousness, a new confidence in his Providence in life or in death. When Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God the Father Almighty, death the last enemy was overthrown and the gross darkness upon the face of the earth was dispelled. The light of God's Presence, with life and love, burst upon and flooded the earth. The people that dwelt in the valley of the shadow of death saw it, and lived in it, and gave thanks. God had vindicated the Man on the Cross. He had vindicated himself as the good and righteous Creator. He had shown forth his creation as altogether good and this life of his making as a blessing. He had answered the first and last cry from the land of the living by setting the Prince of life on his right hand, for a Lord and King forever. Thus it was that the Spirit of God began to move mightily among men, making a new creature with "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

The Christian Church came into being with the preaching of the Good News of the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. This it was that men believed and in this it was that men rejoiced with unspeakable joy. This it was that restored them to faith in God. If we are to receive the Gospel with the joy of the first Christians, if we are to know the new life and righteousness which it brought into the world, we have to put first things first. We have to recognize that the Gospel is first of all the Good News of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. But we can do this only if we comprehend human existence and our elemental need for salvation in the light of this same Gospel. The Gospel was not in the beginning the good news of the forgiveness of sins. It was not as sinners that the disciples believed in the Resurrection, and they did not see in it at first their redemption from sin. They believed it as desperate men who had lost their Friend to death, and therefore as men who no longer trusted in God. With the death of Jesus the human hope integral to life had suffered a deadly suspension, and with the Resurrection it was this hope that became vindicated and with it man's original faith in God. In the Resurrection God revealed life as the first blessing he has bestowed upon us and the hope of the creature in God as the *sine qua non* of the good life. That in man which responded with joy to the Resurrection was the living soul's elemental love of life implanted in us by God's very act of creation. The Resurrection of Jesus was the vindication of this love and with it, as its essence, the vindication of faith in God the Creator.

The absolute responsibility of man before God is established through

the Resurrection and not otherwise. The absolute claim of God to the creature's honor and obedience is inseparable from His self-revelation in the Resurrection as the Lord "who redeemeth thy life from destruction." The creature is not responsible to exercise absolute fidelity before the Creator, as enjoined in Scripture, unless the Creator be also the Savior. Such fidelity presupposes God's prior fidelity to the life he has made and this fidelity can be established only through the Resurrection. It presupposes the creature's thankfulness to God and joy in God; but how can the creature rejoice and be thankful unless Christ be risen from the dead? And without joy and thankfulness, there is no responsibility. The deliverance from Egypt made Israel joyful and responsible before their God, to hear his voice and to obey his commandments. The deliverance from the greater bondage, that is to death, became the joy of the world and established the new covenant wherein we are to hear the word of God and obey him. How indeed can the dead praise God, and how can they be responsible to believe and sin not against him?

We know from the history of the ancient Hebrews, let alone the histories of other peoples, that it has always been extremely difficult to convince men of "goodness at the heart of things," and to persuade them to live conformably to it. Such a thing is now impossible, except through the Gospel of the Resurrection. Without faith in God's triumph in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, man has a tight and immovable case against the Providence of God. There is without it no argument or exhortation which can convince him of the goodness of life or of its Creator, and can convict him of sin against God when he does evil. We might add at this point that there is nothing in the Christian faith, from the doctrine of the Creator to the doctrine of the life everlasting, which can be maintained without distortion except by the faith that Jesus is risen.

V

Our theories of the atonement have assumed that it was sin that led Jesus to the Cross. Without the light of the Resurrection, nobody can see such a thing. It is hypocritical and unilluminating to judge those who demanded the crucifixion of Jesus as merely wicked men. The authorities as authorities involved in the case, both Jewish and Roman, were concerned about peace and order, which seemed put in jeopardy by the Man from Galilee. They, as men, and with them the multitudes who cried for the blood of the Nazarene, greeted the cruel death of the Cross with a crazed gratification which reveals an elemental bitterness in the human

soul, a bitterness bound up with a life without hope, a life in bondage to death and to the works of death. From the days of Cain, men have been prone to murder and to be gratified by the death of their fellow men. There is a fountain of inhumanity in the heart of man, and it was the waters of this same fountain which overwhelmed Jesus. It is not enough to say that the murderers of Jesus were wicked and lawless men. They were men without faith in God and without hope for their lives. They were men in bondage to the devil who rules the world through the fear of death and persuades men to hate their Creator and themselves and their fellow men, and to find pleasure in evil. So it is that the world is subject to murder and misery. So it is now as it was then.

God is wiser than we, and he understands us better than we ourselves. In his "plan of redemption" he did not deal with us according to our schemes of "sin and salvation." He did not treat us as those who have, by an arbitrary and wicked act of the will, violated his Person and his Law. He came to us not demanding satisfaction for a debt due him, but with love and compassion for those who were lost and in despair in the valley of death. He came not to demand our obedience but to increase our faith, to vindicate himself as the Creator and the Lord of life, as God who has a right to our confidence in him in life and in death. He came to break the power of death in our lives, for he knew that the devil through death tempts us to despair of our lives and that in despair we sin against him all our days. He knew that the remedy must be according to the illness; and since the illness was unbelief, as Jesus knew well enough, he provided us with faith and with hope. The faith he gave us was in God the Creator, and the hope he gave us was for life everlasting with him. As the illness, so was the remedy: he raised Jesus from the dead. When Jesus rose and ascended, the Holy Spirit came, with faith and hope and joy. And with joy came love, love for God, the self and the neighbor.

The work of reconciliation through the Cross was accomplished by Jesus' faithfulness to God and in obedience to his will. But this faithfulness and this obedience received their primary qualification from that faith which is exercised in the matter of life and death. It has been always recognized that without obedience there would have been no atonement. It has also been recognized that "obedience unto death" contains a peculiar virtue; that the death of Jesus reveals the perfection of his obedience. But it has not been always clear that the obedience of the Cross was an obedience which reveals the essence of that obedience which the Creator demands of the creature. The first law which binds the living being to the

Author of life is the creature's faith in God with regard to his life. When the creature does not trust in God with regard to his life, when in confronting death he does not also confront his Father, when he does not commend his life to God his Maker, in hope and joy, he neither believes in God nor obeys him. The obedience of Jesus to God, which was necessary for our reconciliation with God, was the obedience of the creature to the Creator, which obedience is rooted in and replenished at all time by faith. The debt which Jesus paid by his death was the debt of faith. Faith was the satisfaction, propitiation, expiation offered to God. And this faith was the living soul's cleaving to God in life and in death. By so cleaving this Man was without sin. So the law of right relation between the Creator and the creature was re-established, and the Creator received his due in honor and obedience.

The need for the Cross as the means of our redemption from sin has been rather doubtful. If sin be disobedience to the law of God, and if the law of God be somewhat contained in the Ten Commandments, it is not at all clear why Jesus should have suffered the Cross in order to satisfy the law of God. Why was not his life of conformity to the Divine commandments against theft, adultery, murder, and coveting sufficient as satisfaction to the Law of God? Why did he have to be crucified and to die as a wicked criminal, which he was not? The orthodox answer that the blood of the Son of God had a peculiar quality or value whereby it could be substituted for the sins of the world is arbitrary and does not satisfy the mind. If sin was the problem, and sin has no initial connection with death, obedience would have been the solution, obedience without the Cross. The traditional argument ends with the lame statement that there was no necessity for the Cross except in the will of God.

But God is not arbitrary, and he is a better thinker than we are. He chose the way of the Cross because there is a profound congruity between it and man's misery. True faith in God and true obedience to him as the Creator could not have been exhibited except in the Son of Man's confrontation with the power of death and the victory of his faith over it. The Author of Life found it fitting to establish his claim upon the creature's faith and faithfulness by the faith and faithfulness of a creature tempted as we are to resent God's authority as the Lord of life and of death. Had not Jesus died as he did, there would have been no way of convincing us that he rendered to God what is God's due, that is, faith to him as our Creator. Had not God confronted Jesus with death, and had not Jesus shown forth his faith in death, I who must strive with death all my days and rebel daily because of it, would find in Jesus neither the faith nor

the obedience I owe to God. We perish for want of faith, and by faith are we saved. But faith which is not in death is not faith in God. Wherefore the Son of Man was delivered to his enemies who condemned him to death and crucified him. In the nature of the case it could not have been otherwise. But we say this because of the Resurrection.

VI

The sin in unbelief was revealed and acknowledged when God raised Jesus from the dead. The Resurrection put men in a position to understand that in their unbelief and disobedience they are wrong and unjust toward their Creator. Now they saw that their despair and bitterness and inhumanity are not simply innocent responses to the misery of their existence in this world, but guilty consequences of their infidelity to God and of their transgression of his Law. When the evidence of the Resurrection was introduced into the controversy between the Creator and the creature, the creature's case against the Creator, apparently so obvious and strong, was nullified and thrown out of court. God was vindicated in his creation and government of the world, and the tempter was proved to be the prince of lies. The light of the glory of Divine perfection burst forth in the darkness of this world, and men saw it and rejoiced. They rejoiced in his love, and justice, and wisdom, and might. And in this joy they saw their sin, and repented of it. It is not enough to say that the knowledge of sin presupposes the knowledge of God. There is an "uneasy conscience," a sense of guilt compounded with self-pity and bitterness, mixed with a confused sense of deity, which conceals sin and makes it deadly. The knowledge of sin which leads to repentance and to life comes from that joy in God and love of God as the Author of life which are the blessing of God in Christ Jesus risen from the dead. This knowledge is the consequence of salvation, of the reunion of the creature with the Creator in righteousness.

When we look at the Cross in the light of the Resurrection, we see that the death of Jesus was the work of sin as well as of death. But such understanding of the Cross can only be a reflection of our self-knowledge by faith. It is only as we know sin in us that we can apprehend the part which sin played in the death of Jesus. Now we know that the Cross was not a tragedy which we can explain away in terms of political or psychological necessity. We see it as the decisive manifestation of man's enmity toward his God and his consequent inhumanity toward his Neighbor. There we are judged together with those who crucified Jesus, and found guilty. Thus it is that we are led to acknowledge the justice of God and the love of God which were satisfied by the faith of the Crucified: the

justice with its imperious demand for faith and the love which restored it to mankind in Jesus Christ. Now we see, in the light of the Resurrection, that the Father delivered up the Son to death, by his determinate counsel and foreknowledge, in his love and wisdom, for our deliverance from our bondage to sin and death. Thus the Cross is raised up before us resplendent with the Creator's righteousness. So it is that the Cross is wonderful. So it is that with the Resurrection, the Cross is the revelation of the Creator who is also the Father, and of the Father who is also the Creator.

It is natural for the living to love life, and for man to live in the knowledge and the love of the Author of life. But by death man is tempted to doubt God and to despair of his life. He is thus alienated from his Creator and disbelieves his goodness, which disbelief is sin and at the root of all the inhumanities and miseries which infest our world.

The creature is saved as he is reconciled with the Creator. This reconciliation is effected as he is delivered from the power of sin and death, as he repents and is forgiven by his heavenly Father. Salvation is the consent of the creature to live as creature, that is to trust his life to the Creator and to spend it in thankfulness and obedience to God. It is that honesty of the creature which enables him to acknowledge that he has no power over death, and it is the humility which has the good sense to acknowledge that such power belongs to God alone. It is the faith of Jesus on the Cross and the hope of the Resurrection.

Salvation is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." It is the integrity of man before his God: an integrity which means a sound mind as well as a good conscience. It is the creature's good health and wholesomeness of life. It is a new ability to enjoy peace amidst the uncertainties of our existence and a new joy in the midst of its grievances. When the creature comes to trust God, being's consent to being becomes a source of peace and joy which enable him to overcome evil as well as giving him patience to endure it. Human life is endowed with a new courage in the presence of evil. The human mind is made free for order and proportion and justice. The heart of man learns to care for others with a new regard for their being and their good. The love of God, the love of life, and the love of the living are conjoined in the one love which is the good of God's creation and the crown of the creature's glory.

But this love is by faith and hope, and both are the gift of God in Christ Jesus—who lived and died in faith, and rose again from the dead for our hope.

The Innocent Nation in an Innocent World

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

I

PRACTICALLY all schools of modern culture, whatever their differences, are united in their rejection of the Christian doctrine of original sin. This doctrine asserts the obvious fact that all men are persistently inclined to regard themselves more highly and to be more assiduously concerned with their own interests than any "objective" view of their importance would warrant. Modern culture in its various forms feels certain that, if men could be sufficiently objective or disinterested to recognize the injustice of excessive self-interest, they could also in time transfer the objectivity of their judgments as observers of the human scene to their judgments as actors and agents in human history. This is an absurd notion which every practical statesman or man of affairs knows how to discount because he encounters ambitions and passions in his daily experience, which refute the regnant modern theory of potentially innocent men and nations. There is consequently a remarkable hiatus between the shrewdness of practical men of affairs and the speculations of our wise men. The latter are frequently convinced that the predicament of our possible involvement in an atomic and global conflict is due primarily to failure of the statesmen to heed the advice of our psychological and social scientists. The statesmen on the other hand have fortunately been able to disregard the admonition of our wise men because they could still draw upon the native shrewdness of the common people who in smaller realms have had something of the same experience with human nature as the statesmen. The statesmen have not been particularly brilliant in finding solutions for our problems, all of which have reached global dimensions. But they have, at least, steered a course which still offers us minimal hope of avoiding a global conflict.

But whether or not we avoid another war, we are covered with

REINHOLD NIEBUHR, D.D., LL.D., is Dean of the Faculty and Professor of Applied Christianity at Union Theological Seminary, New York City. The above article is Chapter II of his forthcoming book, *The Irony of American History*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952.

prospective guilt. We have dreamed of a purely rational adjustment of interests in human society; and we are involved in "total" wars. We have dreamed of a "scientific" approach to all human problems; and we find that the tensions of a world-wide conflict release individual and collective emotions not easily brought under rational control. We had hoped to make neat and sharp distinctions between justice and injustice; and we discover that even the best human actions involve some guilt.

This vast involvement in guilt in a supposedly innocent world achieves a specially ironic dimension through the fact that the two leading powers engaged in the struggle are particularly innocent according to their own official myth and collective memory. The Russian-Communist pretensions of innocency and the monstrous evils which are generated from them, are the fruit of a variant of the liberal dogma. According to the liberal dogma men are excessively selfish because they lack the intelligence to consider interests other than their own. But this higher intelligence can be supplied of course by education. Or they are betrayed into selfishness by unfavorable social and political environment. This can be remedied by the growth of scientifically perfected social institutions.

The communist dogma is more specific. Men are corrupted by a particular social institution: the institution of property. The abolition of this institution guarantees the return of mankind to the state of original innocency which existed before the institution of property arose, a state which Engels describes as one of idyllic harmony with "no soldiers, no gendarmes, no policemen, prefects or judges, no prisons, laws or lawsuits."

The initiators of this return to innocency are the proletarian class. This class is innocent because it has no interests to defend; and it cannot become "master of the productive forces of society except by abolishing their mode of appropriation." The proletarians cannot free themselves from slavery without emancipating the whole of mankind from injustice. Once this act of emancipation has been accomplished every action and event on the other side of the revolution participates in this new freedom from guilt. A revolutionary nation is guiltless because the guilt of "imperialism" has been confined to "capitalistic" nations "by definition." Thus the lust for power which enters into most individual and collective human actions is obscured. The priest-kings of this new revolutionary state, though they wield inordinate power because they have gathered both economic and political control in the hands of a single oligarchy, are also, in theory, innocent of any evil. Their interests and those of the masses whom they control are, by definition, identical since neither owns property.

Even the vexatious and tyrannical rule of Russia over the smaller communist states is completely obscured and denied by the official theory. Hamilton Fish Armstrong reports Bukharin's interpretation of the relation of communist states to each other as follows:

Bukharin explained at length that national rivalry between Communist states was "an impossibility by definition." "What creates wars," he said, "is the competition of monopoly capitalisms for raw materials and markets. Capitalist society is made up of selfish and competing national units and therefore is by definition a world at war. Communist society will be made up of unselfish and harmonious units and therefore will be by definition a world at peace. Just as capitalism cannot live without war, so war cannot live with Communism."¹

It is difficult to conceive of a more implausible theory of human nature and conduct. Yet it is one which achieves a considerable degree of plausibility, once the basic assumptions are accepted. It, at any rate, has been plausible enough to beguile millions of people, many of whom are not under the direct control of the tyranny and are therefore free to consider critical challenges of its adequacy. So powerful has been this illusory restoration of human innocence that, for all we know, the present communist oligarchs, who pursue their ends with such cruelty, may still be believers. The powers of human self-deception are seemingly endless. The communist tyrants may well legitimize their cruelties not only to the conscience of their devotees but to their own by recourse to an official theory which proves their innocence "by definition."

John Adams in his warnings to Thomas Jefferson would seem to have had a premonition of this kind of politics. At any rate, he understood the human situation well enough to have stated a theory which comprehended what we now see in communism.

Power [he wrote] always thinks it has a great soul and vast views beyond the comprehension of the weak; and that it is doing God's service when it is violating all His laws. Our passions, ambitions, avarice, love and resentment, etc., possess so much metaphysical subtlety and so much overpowering eloquence that they insinuate themselves into the understanding and the conscience and convert both to their party.

Adams' understanding of the power of the self's passions and ambitions to corrupt the self's reason is a simple recognition of the facts of life which refute all theories, whether liberal or Marxist, about the possibility of a completely disinterested self. Adams, as every Christian understanding of man has done, nicely anticipated the Marxist theory of an "ideological taint" in reason when men reason about each other's affairs and arrive

¹ Armstrong, H. F., *Tito and Goliath*, p. ix.

at conclusions about each other's virtues, interests and motives. The crowning irony of the Marxist theory of ideology is that it foolishly and self-righteously confined the source of this taint to economic interest and to a particular class. It was, therefore, incapable of recognizing all the corruptions of ambition and power which would creep inevitably into its paradise of innocence.

In any event we have to deal with a vast religious-political movement which generates more extravagant forms of political injustice and cruelty out of the pretensions of innocence than we have ever known in human history.

The liberal world which opposes this monstrous evil is filled ironically with milder forms of the same pretension. Fortunately they have not resulted in the same evils, partly because they are not as consistently held; and partly because we have not invested our ostensible "innocents" with inordinate power. Though a tremendous amount of illusion about human nature expresses itself in American culture, our political institutions contain many of the safeguards against the selfish abuse of power which our Calvinist fathers insisted upon. According to the accepted theory, our democracy owes everything to the believers in the innocence and perfectibility of man and little to the reservations about human nature which emanated from the Christianity of New England. But fortunately there are quite a few accents in our constitution which spell out the warning of John Cotton: "Let all the world give mortall man no greater power than they are content they shall use, for use it they will. . . . And they that have the liberty to speak great things you will find that they will speak great blasphemies."²

II

But these reservations of Christian realism in our culture cannot obscure the fact that, next to the Russian pretensions, we are (according to our traditional theory) the most innocent nation on earth. The irony of our situation lies in the fact that we could not be virtuous (in the sense of practicing the virtues which are implicit in meeting our vast world responsibilities) if we were really as innocent as we pretend to be. It is particularly remarkable that the two great religious-moral traditions which informed our early life—New England Calvinism and Virginian Deism and Jeffersonianism—arrive at remarkably similar conclusions about the meaning of our national character and destiny. Calvinism may have held

² Miller, Perry, *The Puritans*, p. 213.

too pessimistic views of human nature, and too mechanical views of the providential ordering of human life. But when it assessed the significance of the American experiment both its conceptions of American destiny and its appreciation of American virtue finally arrived at conclusions strikingly similar to those of Deism.

Whether our nation interprets its spiritual heritage through Massachusetts or Virginia, we came into existence with the sense of being a "separated" nation, which God was using to make a new beginning for mankind. We had renounced the evils of European feudalism. We had escaped from the evils of European religious bigotry. We had found broad spaces for the satisfaction of human desires in place of the crowded Europe. Whether, as in the case of the New England theocrats, our forefathers thought of our "experiment" as primarily the creation of a new and purer church, or, as in the case of Jefferson and his coterie, they thought primarily of a new political community, they believed in either case that we had been called out by God to create a new humanity. We were God's "American Israel." Our pretensions of innocence therefore heightened the whole concept of a virtuous humanity which characterizes the culture of our era; and involve us in the ironic incongruity between our illusions and the realities which we experience. We find it almost as difficult as the communists to believe that anyone could think ill of us, since we are as persuaded as they that our society is so essentially virtuous that only malice could prompt criticism of any of our actions.

The New England conception of our virtue began as the belief that the church which had been established on our soil was purer than any church of Christendom. In Edward Johnson's *Wonder Working Providence of Zion's Saviour* (1650) the belief is expressed that "Jesus Christ had manifested his kingly office toward his churches more fully than ever yet the sons of men saw." Practically every Puritan tract contained the conviction that the Protestant Reformation reached its final culmination here. While the emphasis lay primarily upon the new purity of the church, even the Puritans envisaged a new and perfect society. Johnson further spoke of New England as the place "where the Lord would create a new heaven and a new earth, new churches and a new commonwealth together." And a century later President Stiles of Yale preached a sermon on "The United States elevated to glory and honor" in which he defined the nation as "God's American Israel."

The Jeffersonian conception of the innocence and virtue of the new nation was not informed by the biblical symbolism of the New England

tracts. His religious faith was a form of Christianity which had passed through the rationalism of the French Enlightenment. His sense of providence was expressed in his belief in the power of "nature's God" over the vicissitudes of history. In any event, nature's God had a very special purpose in founding this new community. The purpose was to make a new beginning in a corrupt world. Two facts about America impressed the Jeffersonians. The one was that we had broken with tyranny. The other was that the wide economic opportunities of the new continent would prevent the emergence of those social vices which characterized the social life of an overcrowded Continent of Europe.

Jefferson was convinced that the American mind had achieved a freedom from the prejudice which corrupted the European minds, which could not be equaled in Europe in centuries. "If all the sovereigns of Europe," he declared, "were to set themselves to work to emancipate the minds of their subjects from their present ignorance and prejudice and that as zealously as they now attempt the contrary a thousand years would not place them on that high ground on which our common people are now setting out."³

One interesting aspect of these illusions of "new beginnings" in history is that they are never quite as new as is assumed, and never remain quite as pure as when they are new. Jefferson regarded the distinction between American democracy and European tyranny as an absolute one. "Under the pretense of governing," he declared in describing the European nations, "they have divided their nations into two classes, the wolves and the sheep. I can apply no milder term to the governments of Europe and to the general prey of the rich upon the poor."⁴ This was an understandable judgment of the state of political justice in the period of the decay of feudal society. But it was hardly a fair judgment of the potentialities for democracy which were embodied in the settlement which brought William and Mary to the throne of England in 1688. It was, furthermore, generative and typical of many subsequent American judgments which obscured developments of democratic justice in Europe, particularly those which proceeded without disturbing the institution of monarchy. For monarchy remained a simple symbol of injustice to the American imagination.

The Jeffersonian poet, Freneau, used biblical symbolism despite his rejection of orthodox faith, to describe the significance of America's break

³ *Writings*, II, p. 249.

⁴ *Writings*, VI, p. 58.

with the traditions of tyranny. While still a student at the College of New Jersey he gave poetic expression to his faith:

Here independent power shall hold sway
And public virtue warm the patriot's breast
No traces shall remain of tyranny
And laws and patterns for the world beside
Be here enacted first.
A new Jerusalem sent down from heaven
Shall grace our happy earth.

In common with the Enlightenment Jefferson sometimes ascribed our superior virtue to our rational freedom from traditional prejudices and sometimes to the favorable social circumstances of the American Continent. "Before the establishment of the American States," he declared, "nothing was known to history but the man of the old world crowded within limits either small or overcharged and steeped in vices which the situation generates. A government adapted to such men would be one thing, but a different one for the man of these States. Here every man may have land to labor for himself; or preferring the exercise of any other industry, may exact for it such compensation as not only to afford a comfortable subsistence but wherewith to provide a cessation from labor in old age."⁵

The illusions of a unique innocency were not confined to our earliest years. De Toqueville was made aware of them again and again on the American frontier:

If I say to an American [he reported] that their country is a fine one, aye he replies and there is not its equal in the world. If I applaud the freedom its inhabitants enjoy he answers "freedom is a fine thing but few nations are worthy of it." If I remark on the purity of morals that distinguishes the United States he declares, "I can imagine that a stranger who has witnessed the corruption which prevails in other nations would be astonished at the difference." At length I leave him to a contemplation of himself. But he returns to the charge and does not desist until he has got me to repeat all I have been saying. It is impossible to conceive of a more troublesome and garrulous patriotism."⁶

Every nation has its own form of spiritual pride. These examples of American self-appreciation could be matched by similar sentiments in other nations. But every nation also has its peculiar version. Our version is that our nation turned its back upon the vices of Europe and made a new beginning.

The Jeffersonian conception of virtue, had it not overstated the inno-

⁵ *Writings*, XIII, p. 401. (Letter to John Adams on natural aristocracy.)

⁶ De Toqueville, *American Democracy*, Vol. II, p. 225.

cency of American social life, would have been a tolerable prophecy of some aspects of our social history which have distinguished us from Europe. For it can hardly be denied that the fluidity of our class structure, derived from the opulence of economic opportunities, saved us from the acrimony of the class struggle in Europe, and avoided the class rebellion, which Marx could prompt in Europe but not in America. When the frontier ceased to provide for the expansion of opportunities, our superior technology created ever new frontiers for the ambitious and adventurous. In one sense the opulence of American life has served to perpetuate Jeffersonian illusions about human nature. For we have thus far solved all our problems by the expansion of our economy. This expansion cannot go on forever and ultimately we must face some vexatious issues of social justice in terms which will not differ too greatly from those which the wisest nations of Europe have been forced to use.

The idea that men would not come in conflict with one another, if the opportunities were wide enough, was partly based upon the assumption that all human desires are determinate and all human ambitions ordinate. This assumption was shared by our Jeffersonians with the French Enlightenment. "Every man," declared Tom Paine, "wishes to pursue his occupation and enjoy the fruits of his labors and the produce of his property in peace and safety and with the least possible expense. When these things are accomplished all objects for which governments ought to be established are accomplished."⁷ The same idea underlies the Marxist conception of the difference between an "economy of scarcity" and an "economy of abundance." In an economy of abundance there is presumably no cause for rivalry. Neither Jeffersonians nor Marxists had any understanding for the perennial conflicts of power and pride which may arise on every level of "abundance" since human desires grow with the means of their gratification.

There is one note of realism which runs through Jefferson's idyllic picture of American innocence. That consists in his preference for an agricultural over an urban society. Jefferson was confident of the future virtue of America only in so far as it would continue as an agricultural nation. Fearing the social tensions and the subordination of man to man in a highly organized social structure, his ideal community consisted of independent freeholders, each tilling his own plot of ground and enjoying the fruits of his own labor. "Dependence begets subservience," he wrote in extolling

⁷ Thomas Paine, *The Rights of Man*, Part II, Ch. 4.

the life of the farmer. "It suffocates the germ of virtue and prepares fit tools for the design of ambition."⁸

There is a special irony in the contrast between the course of American history toward the development of large-scale industry and Jefferson's belief that democracy was secure only in an agrarian economy. America has become what Jefferson most feared; but the moral consequences have not been as catastrophic as he anticipated. While democracy is tainted by more corruption in our great metropolitan areas than in the remainder of our political life, we have managed to achieve a tolerable justice in the collective relations of industry by balancing power against power and equilibrating the various competing social forces of society. The rise of the labor movement has been particularly important in achieving this result; for its organization of the power of the workers was necessary to produce the counter-weight to the great concentrations of economic power which justice requires. We have engaged in precisely those collective actions for the sake of justice which Jefferson regarded as wholly incompatible with justice.

The ironic contrast between Jeffersonian hopes and fears for America and the actual realities is increased by the exchange of ideological weapons between the early and the later Jeffersonians. The early Jeffersonians sought to keep political power weak, discouraging both the growth of federal power in relation to the States and of political power in relation to economic life. They feared that such power would be compounded with the economic power of the privileged and used against the less favored. Subsequently the wielders of great economic power adopted the Jeffersonian maxim that the best possible government is the least possible government. The American democracy, as every other healthy democracy, had learned to use the more equal distribution of political power, inherent in universal suffrage, as leverage against the tendency toward concentration of power in economic life. Culminating in the "New Deal," national governments, based upon an alliance of farmers, workers and middle classes, have used the power of the state to establish minimal standards of "welfare" in housing, social security, health services, etc. Naturally, the higher income groups benefited less from these minimal standards of justice, and paid a proportionately higher cost for them than the proponents of the measures of a "welfare state." The former, therefore, used the

⁸ *Writings*, II, p. 229. "Those who labor in the earth," said Jefferson, "are the chosen people of God if ever he had a chosen people." *Ibid.*

ideology of Jeffersonianism to counter these tendencies; while the classes in society which had Jefferson's original interest in equality discarded his ideology because they were less certain than he that complete freedom in economic relations would inevitably make for equality.

In this development the less privileged classes developed a realistic appreciation of the factor of power in social life, while the privileged classes try to preserve the illusion of classical liberalism that power is not an important element in man's social life. They recognize the force of interest; but they continue to assume that the competition of interests will make for justice without political or moral regulation. This would be possible only if the various powers which support interest were fairly equally divided, which they never are.

Since America developed as a bourgeois society, with only remnants of the older feudal culture to inform its ethos, it naturally inclined toward the bourgeois ideology which neglects the factor of power in the human community and equates interest with rationality.

Such a society regards all social relations as essentially innocent because it believes self-interest to be inherently harmless. It is, in common with Marxism, blind to the lust for power in the motives of men; but also to the injustices which flow from the disbalances of power in the community. Both the bourgeois ideology and Marxism equate self-interest with the economic motive. The bourgeois world either regards economic desire as inherently ordinate or it hopes to hold it in check either by prudence (as in the thought of the utilitarians) or by the pressure of the self-interest of others (as in classical liberalism). Marxism, on the other hand, believes that the disbalance of power in industrial society, plus the inordinate character of the economic motive, must drive a bourgeois society to greater and greater injustice and more and more overt social conflict.

Thus the conflict between communism and the bourgeois world achieves a special virulence between the two great hegemonous nations of the respective alliances, because America is, in the eyes of communism, an exemplar of the worst form of capitalistic injustice, while it is, in its own eyes, a symbol of pure innocence and justice. This ironic situation is heightened by the fact that every free nation in alliance with us is more disposed to bring economic life under political control than our traditional theory allows. There is therefore considerable moral misunderstanding between ourselves and our allies. This represents a milder version of the contradiction between ourselves and our foes. The classes in our society, who pretend that only political power is dangerous, frequently suggest

that our allies are tainted with the same corruption as that of our foes. European nations, on the other hand, frequently judge us according to our traditional theory. They fail to recognize that our actual achievements in social justice have been won by a pragmatic approach to the problems of power, which has not been less efficacious for its lack of consistent speculation upon the problems of power and justice. Our achievements in this field represent the triumph of common sense over the theories of both our business oligarchy and the speculations of those social scientists who are still striving for a "scientific" and disinterested justice. We are, in short, more virtuous than our detractors, whether foes or allies, admit, because we know ourselves to be less innocent than our theories assume. The force and danger of self-interest in human affairs is too obvious to remain long obscure to those who are not too blinded by either theory or interest to see the obvious. The relation of power to interest on the one hand and to justice on the other is equally obvious. In our domestic affairs we have thus builded better than we knew, because we have not taken the early dreams of our peculiar innocence too seriously.

III

Our foreign policy reveals even more marked contradictions between our early illusions of innocence and the hard realities of the present day than do our domestic policies. We lived for a century not only in the illusion but in the reality of innocence in our foreign relations. We lacked the power in the first instance to become involved in the guilt of its use. As we gradually achieved power, through the economic consequences of our richly stored continent, the continental unity of our economy and the technical efficiency of our business and industrial enterprise, we sought for a time to preserve innocence by disavowing the responsibilities of power. We were, of course, never as innocent as we pretended to be, even as a child is not as innocent as is implied in the use of the child as the symbol of innocence. The surge of our infant strength over a continent, which claimed Oregon and Texas against any sovereignty which may have stood in our way, was not innocent. It was the expression of a will-to-power of a new community in which the land-hunger of hardy pioneers and settlers furnished the force of imperial expansion. The organs of government, whether political or military, played only a secondary role. From those early days to the present moment we have frequently been honestly deceived because our power availed itself of covert rather than overt instruments. One of the most prolific causes of delusion about power in a

commercial society is that economic power is more covert than political or military power.

We believed, until the outbreak of the First World War, that there was a generic difference between us and the other nations of the world. This was proved by the difference between their power rivalries and our alleged contentment with our lot. The same President of the United States who ultimately interpreted the First World War as a crusade to "make the world safe for democracy" reacted to its first alarms with the reassuring judgment that the conflict represented trade rivalries with which we need not be concerned. We were drawn into the war by considerations of national interest, which we hardly dared to confess to ourselves. Our European critics may, however, overshoot the mark if they insist that the slogan of making "the world safe for democracy" was merely an expression of that moral cant which we seemed to have inherited from the British, only to express it with less subtlety than they. For the fact is that every nation is caught in the moral paradox of refusing to go to war unless it can be proved that the national interest is imperiled, and of continuing in the war only by proving that something much more than national interest is at stake. Our nation is not the only community of mankind which is tempted to hypocrisy. Every nation must come to terms with the fact that, though the force of collective self-interest is so great, national policy must be based upon it; yet also the sensitive conscience recognizes that the moral obligation of the individual transcends his particular community. Loyalty to the community is therefore morally tolerable only if it includes values wider than those of the community.

More significant than our actions and interpretations in the First World War was our mood after its conclusion. Our "realists" feared that our sense of responsibility toward a nascent world community had exceeded the canons of a prudent self-interest. Our idealists, on the other hand, sought to preserve our innocence by neutrality. The main force of isolationism came from the "realists," as the slogan "America First" signifies. But the abortive effort to defy the forces of history which were both creating a potential world community and increasing the power of America beyond that of any other nation, was supported by pacifist idealists, Christian and secular, and by other visionaries who desired to preserve our innocence. They had a dim and dark understanding of the fact that power cannot be wielded without guilt, since it is never transcendent over interest, even when it tries to subject itself to universal standards and places itself under the control of a nascent world-wide community. They did not

understand that the disavowal of the responsibilities of power can involve an individual or nation in even more grievous guilt.

There are two ways of denying our responsibilities to our fellow men. The one is the way of imperialism, expressed in seeking to dominate them by our power. The other is the way of isolationism, expressed in seeking to withdraw from our responsibilities to them. Geographic circumstances and the myths of our youth rendered us more susceptible to the latter than the former temptation. This has given our national life a unique color, which is not without some moral advantages. No powerful nation in history has ever been more reluctant to acknowledge the position it has achieved in the world than we. The moral advantage lies in the fact that we do not have a strong lust of power, though we are quickly acquiring the pride of power which always accompanies its possession. Our lack of the lust of power makes the fulminations of our foes against us singularly inept. On the other hand, we have been so deluded by the concept of our innocency that we are ill prepared to deal with the temptations of power which now assail us.

The Second World War quickly dispelled the illusions of both our realists and idealists; and also proved the vanity of the hopes of the legalists who thought that rigorous neutrality laws could abort the historical tendencies which were pushing our nation into the center of the world community. We emerged from that war the most powerful nation on earth. To the surprise of our friends and critics we seemed also to have sloughed off the tendencies toward irresponsibility which had characterized us in the long armistice between the world wars. We were determined to exercise the responsibilities of our power.

The exercise of this power required us to hold back the threat of Europe's inundation by communism through the development of all kinds of instruments of mass destruction, including atomic weapons. Thus an "innocent" nation finally arrives at the ironic climax of its history. It finds itself the custodian of the ultimate weapon which perfectly embodies and symbolizes the moral ambiguity of physical warfare. We could not disavow the possible use of the weapon, partly because no imperiled nation is morally able to dispense with weapons which might insure its survival. All nations, unlike some individuals, lack the capacity to prefer a noble death to a morally ambiguous survival. But we also could not renounce the weapon because the freedom or survival of our allies depended upon the threat of its use. Of this at least Mr. Winston Churchill and other Europeans have assured us. Yet if we should use it, we will cover

ourselves with a terrible guilt. We might insure our survival in a world in which it might be better not to be alive. Thus the moral predicament in which all human striving is involved has been raised to a final pitch for a culture and for a nation which thought it an easy matter to distinguish between justice and injustice and believed itself to be peculiarly innocent. In this way the perennial moral predicaments of human history have caught up with a culture which knew nothing of sin or guilt, and with a nation which seemed to be the most perfect fruit of that culture.

Naturally, a culture so confident of the possibility of resolving all incongruities in life and history was bound to make strenuous efforts to escape the tragic dilemma in which we find ourselves. These efforts fall into two categories, idealistic and realistic. The idealists naturally believe that we could escape the dilemma if we made sufficiently strenuous rational and moral efforts; if for instance we tried to establish a world government. Unfortunately the obvious necessity of integrating the global community politically does not guarantee its possibility. And all the arguments of the idealists finally rest upon a logic which derives the possibility of an achievement from its necessity. Other idealists believe that a renunciation of the use of atomic weapons would free us from the dilemma. But this is merely the old pacifist escape from the dilemma of war itself.

The realists on the other hand are inclined to argue that a good cause will hallow any weapon. They are convinced that the evils of communism are so great that we are justified in using any weapon against them. Thereby they closely approach the communist ruthlessness. The inadequacy of both types of escape from our moral dilemma proves that there is no purely moral solution for the ultimate moral issues of life; but neither is there a viable solution which disregards the moral factors. Men and nations must use their power with the purpose of making it an instrument of justice and a servant of interests broader than their own. Yet they must be ready to use it though they become aware that the power of a particular nation or individual, even when under strong religious and social sanctions, is never so used that there is a perfect coincidence between the value which justifies it and the interest of the wielder of it.

One difficulty of a nation, such as ours, which manifests itself long before we reach the ultimate dilemma of warfare with weapons of mass destruction, is that we have reached our position in the world community through forms of power which are essentially covert rather than overt. Or rather the overt military power which we wield has been directly drawn from the economic power, derived from the wealth of our natural resources

and our technical efficiency. We have had little experience in the claims and counter-claims of man's social existence, either domestically or internationally. We therefore do not know social existence as an encounter between life and life, or interest with interest in which moral and non-moral factors are curiously compounded. It is therefore a weakness of our foreign policy, particularly as our business community conceives it, that we move inconsistently from policies which would overcome animosities toward us by the offer of economic assistance to policies which would destroy resistance by the use of pure military might. We can understand the neat logic of either economic reciprocity or the show of pure power. But we are mystified by the endless complexities of human motives and the varied compounds of ethnic loyalties, cultural traditions, special hopes, envies and fears which enter into the policies of nations, and which lie at the foundation of their political cohesion.

In our relations with Asia these inconsistencies are particularly baffling. We expect Asians to be grateful to us for such assistance as we have given them; and are hurt when we discover that Asians envy, rather than admire, our prosperity and regard us as imperialistic when we are "by definition" a non-imperialistic nation.

Nations are hardly capable of the spirit of forgiveness which is the final oil of harmony in all human relations and which rests upon the contrite recognition that our actions and attitudes are inevitably interpreted in a different light by our friends as well as foes than we interpret them. Yet it is necessary to acquire a measure of this spirit in the collective relations of mankind. Nations, as individuals, who are completely innocent in their own esteem, are insufferable in their human contacts. The whole world suffers from the pretensions of the communist oligarchs. Our pretensions are of a different order because they are not as consistently held. In any event, we have preserved a system of freedom in which they may be challenged. Yet our American nation, involved in its vast responsibilities, must slough off many illusions which were derived both from the experiences and the ideologies of its childhood. Otherwise either we will seek escape from responsibilities which involve unavoidable guilt, or we will be plunged into avoidable guilt by too great confidence in our virtue.

The Miracles—Wings or Weight?

NOLAN B. HARMON

AS ONE WHO deals with and admires many distinguished scholars of the New Testament, I have long realized that I hold a view regarding the Gospel miracles which does not always accord with that of prevalent scholarship. The consensus of opinion among many influential Christian thinkers seems to be that the accounts of the miracles are rather a hindrance to the Christian message than a help; that the modern mind does well to discount and brush away as so much myth, all the tales of marvel and surprise which come to us from the distant past; that primitive people were childlike in their credulity, and saw signs and wonders in events that today we know to be the commonplace operation of a crass, mundane universe. Especially was ancient religious faith saturated with accounts of mysterious phenomena, and in every religion there has always been that which awed and impressed the primitive worshiper. None knew this better than the priests and soothsayers of the past, and even respectable religions, if we may so call them, have felt themselves strengthened when they could cite something which appeared supernatural. It is written in the heart of every man that thunderings and lightnings must somehow accompany the voice of God.

Christianity, in this view, has clinging to it tales of miracles which are the accretion of the ages and represent a primitive stage through which it has passed. Its major documents, the Gospels, by which its message has been checked from generation to generation, were themselves produced by a naïve, simple people who lived in a world they did not at all understand. They wrote with a definite purpose and that purpose was to build up the faith they held. Some of the accounts, for instance, certain miracles of Jesus, therefore, can be explained as invented by a later generation to bolster this, that, or the other concept which at the time the document was written seemed important to the church producing it. Some miracles crept in from the folklore of the people, some by pious imagining, and some seem so out of keeping—for instance, withering the

NOLAN B. HARMON, D.D., D.Litt., is Book Editor of The Methodist Church and Editor-in-Chief of *RELIGION IN LIFE*. When we are dealing with God, he suggests, do human generalities apply?

fig tree—that they are difficult to account for under any hypothesis. The modern man, therefore, knowing all this, has a tendency to brush all miracles aside as impossible events. Like Thomas, unless we see the print of the nail, we do not intend to believe.

Now I am one who believes in the miracles of the New Testament, and that they were, most of them, actual events that transpired pretty much as recorded. I grant that there are some which are not well documented—for instance, the opening of the graves when the crucifixion was taking place. This is found only in one Gospel, and is something that may be explained as a tale which got started due to the confusion when there occurred what I believe did happen, a very real darkening of the sun. Other miracle stories, such as the feeding of five thousand and then four thousand, may be a retelling of the same event. Still others may have been due to natural causes which lent themselves to miraculous interpretation. A modern man should sift all the accounts by such canons of literary and philologic reasoning as are open to him. But with all the sifting, there are some big miracles, if I may call them such, which I believe truly happened. It is my endeavor here, therefore, not so much to “prove” the miracles (indeed, as I shall show, this can scarcely be done), but to examine and set forth those mental processes and the reasoning by which I have come to accept these accounts as fact. How may one, with what is called “intellectual integrity,” hold to the Gospel accounts of miracles?

For purposes of this study let us take chiefly two miracles which can be called the twin pillars of the Christian faith. One is the Incarnation, or God breaking in upon man in the person of Jesus Christ. The other is the Resurrection of Christ from the dead. Both these events occurred in time and both are dated in the Christian’s creed. Both are affirmed in the Apostles’ Creed as objective facts—that there was one called in the august language of the Creed “the Son of God,” who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary—and that this same One was crucified, dead, and buried, and rose again from the dead the third day. Here is an assertion of miracle if there ever was one. Let us look into this.

First, let it be admitted that there is no way in which anyone today can know exactly what happened either at the birth of Jesus Christ or at his resurrection. I refer to crass, empirical knowledge—positivistic knowledge.

Neither, for that matter, can one know what did *not* happen—a point which is equally to be remembered. Nevertheless, I repeat, no one can *know* today whether Jesus was born of a virgin or not; whether he rose a

spiritual or a physical body or exactly what transpired at the Resurrection. The witnesses are all dead, and in some respects their accounts vary. As far as the Virgin Birth is concerned, no one living at the time it happened could have known absolutely. Paternity is always presumptive and presumptive only, to an outside observer. Even the Virgin Mary herself, if we take the record as it stands, is reported as being mystified and troubled by the whole event, and of asking how this thing could possibly be. Only God could really know, and has ever known the actuality of the Virgin Birth, if there was such a thing—as I believe there was. It can neither be proved nor disproved.

For that reason I do not see how it can be made a *sine qua non* of Christian faith, nor why fundamentalists hold that the divinity of our Lord "rests" upon it. If God truly sent his Son into the world, the method by which his Son came was incidental to that transcendent fact. I believe in the Virgin Birth because of Jesus Christ, and not in Jesus Christ because there was a Virgin Birth.

I heard Sir William Ramsay once say in a lecture that he had turned up a tablet somewhere in Asia Minor which had the name of Quirinius on it. This answered the old critical question as to who the Quirinius was under whose governorship there was the "taxing" spoken of in Luke 2. Sir William seemed to feel that he had gotten the answer from his tablet. "Now you ask me about the Virgin Birth," he went on. "I cannot prove it, but *I know it happened.*" What he really meant was, "Not being able to turn up any crass proof such as a stone tablet, I cannot prove, but I *can* believe." His affirmation rested upon faith, which is all that is open to us here.

Proving the Resurrection also is something which defies the canons of inquiry, though here there were many witnesses and the event lent itself to empirical, even positivistic knowledge—certainly as well as other historic events of that day. Bishop Westcott in his Gospel of the Resurrection, with true Victorian assurance stated: "Taking all the evidence, together, there is no single historical incident better or more variously supported than the Resurrection of Christ." But with all the proof we can assess, it is wisdom that comes while knowledge lingers—to reverse Tennyson. "We have but faith; we cannot know, for knowledge is of things we see."

Why then believe, if proof eludes us and is not possible? Because, and here I give my major reason for holding to my belief, it is because we have here to do with God—not man—the God who is the omnipotent

Creator and Ruler of the universe. That is, we bring in a supernatural postulate when we deal with God. It is this which gives transcendent importance to the whole life of Jesus Christ, and to everything he did. It is this that makes us ready to believe these unusual stories regarding the power and miracle-working ability of one named Jesus who briefly lived among us. Were we dealing with a man, we would refuse to believe, but if this were the Son of God, then everything shifts over. A new category comes into play; a category far above *anything* we can quite comprehend on earth.

It is this stark fact which must never be forgotten, and which I do not see how a Christian can forget. It was God who broke in on the world in the person of Jesus Christ. It was God in that manger of Bethlehem; it was God in that boat on the lake when the storm stopped; it was God on the cross when the sky darkened; it was God who burst the tomb inevitably and inexorably on that first Easter morning—once we get that thought fixed in mind, miracles, and portents come, as it were, trailing after him in a perfectly congruent way. Why not an angel chorus and a heavenly song to shepherds, if God was truly born in the city of David, Caesar Augustus being emperor? Why not the star of Bethlehem, and why could not a sudden squall on the lake of Galilee be stopped by the same One who puts the bands of Orion in their place, and who, in his nice direction of nature, watches a sparrow fall, and keeps many sparrows from falling. Humanity, true, cannot make one hair white or black. We cannot be responsible for our own heartbeats as we sit here. But with God—all things are possible. And since unusual wonders take place in us and about us every day, why should we shrink from acknowledging that the God who made all the stars made one special star? May we not hold that he who is the author of all life was himself once in life, and that he whom we believe will raise to eternal life all who trust in him, did begin his new creation with a stupendous miracle at a new-made grave in Joseph's garden when Christ arose, the firstfruits of them that slept?

This, of course, is simply establishing possibility and building on the postulate of a wonder-working God. There are many sincere persons who answer by saying that of course God *could* do all these things, but did he? He works by processes so changeless that we call them laws, and these laws, so far as we can see, vary not as year follows year. The universe is orderly and ordered; likewise, foolproof. Magic is no part of it, and the idea of God playing tricks to induce belief, like a sleight-of-hand man at a county fair, is considered by many as unthinkable. Since we see no

strange aberrations in nature today, it can be argued that men never did see them. They only thought they did. God could have done all those things, but did he?

I think he did. To be sure, if the miracles were manifestations of magic, meaningless except in themselves, they were as such, I say it reverently, unworthy of God. But if each were a part of a larger plan, as are all the miraculous workings of nature around us today; if each were a short cut, as C. S. Lewis holds these to be, toward the accomplishment of a divine purpose, then they have a dignity all their own. "The miracles of earth are the laws of heaven," said Jean Paul Richter.

What, after all, are natural laws? They are not legal enactments, and presumably God himself has never "passed" such "laws" after the manner of a human legislature. They are simply events or processes which have been observed as happening so frequently, or in such a causal chain, as to be called laws of nature. In other words, they are the way God works. But can he not work through some other means? Can he not short-circuit one process in favor of another if it seems good to him? If he cannot, then, to quote George Buttrick, "God is tied up in his own switchboards and water pipes." The potter is molded—certainly stymied—by the clay.

God, for instance, has set in motion all sorts of healing processes throughout animal life—antibodies, white corpuscles, instinct, to name no more. But suppose rather than using these, he uses a touch, a word? God is in every birth and there is miracle at each new life, normal as the world calls it! But suppose God was in one birth in a somewhat different way. Was this so much the greater miracle? In other words, when we deal with God, human rules and generalities simply do not apply. Or to quote the language of the Almighty as the Book of Job cites it: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth . . . when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" In other words—little man, what do *you* know about it?

With the omnipotence of God as our fundamental postulate, it is now time to look at the matter of documentation, of asserted evidence, as this is found in the Gospels. I do not think affirmations of the miraculous can be brushed aside as pious imaginings, unless at the same time one is willing to discount in the same way the tremendous verities which are likewise found in the Gospel pages. To be sure, reverent criticism is always a duty. The evaluation of documents, of variant readings, and all the rest, should have their place. But with all that, miracles are so deeply imbedded in

the New Testament that you cannot get them out without destroying the living fabric. By the same token, I reason no one would have put them in unless there was something more than late first-century writers collecting nebulous rumors. The details of certain miracles are too well sketched in to have been created *de novo*. Truth has a self-evidencing power. Primitive men, above all, insist on exactitude in the repetition of any beloved story. Uncle Remus of our Southland had it right when he said, "As they gi'en it to me, I g'un it to you."

Also if Gospel writers invented these stories, they missed some beautiful chances to invent more. Many times in the New Testament where a miracle might have been claimed, none was. Sometimes, as in the raising of Jairus' daughter, it is not certain whether there was a miracle or not—the event is told stripped bare of all comment. It is our generation, rather than the one which witnessed these events, that worries over what happened. I respect form criticism, but have sometimes felt that it proved too much. If two blind men miraculously received their sight, one by having mud put on his eyes (thus adumbrating the later church's anointing with oil), what about the man who got no mud and yet who saw? The Gospel writer at this point overlooked a bet, or maybe the antimuddists, i.e., the anti-unctionists, had by that time won out over the muddists. We know too much.

To me, it is significant that miracles were not told in certain key places where they should have been, if pious invention was at work. The whole passion story at its climax, from the healing of the servant's ear to the open tomb, proceeds with the once miracle-working Jesus completely helpless in the hands of men. If it were as the evangelists told it, then why was it not as they told it elsewhere? I do not see how we can impugn too greatly our records.

Something else comes into play here which I feel is not always given proper weight. There is a certain instinct and intuition in the evaluation of the things told of God. There is such a thing as Christian experience, and this once felt in a human heart has a power and self-evidencing validity defying analysis. To be sure, there is mysticism which is vague and nebulous, and enthusiasm may run riot—especially with a sanguine or highly imaginative type. For that reason, all intuitive emotions and feelings should be checked by the experience of others, by Scripture, and by the classic past. Here is where the follower of the inner light may get off the beam, if we may mix our metaphors. He should check his experience by that of others, past as well as present. Likewise, intuitive

feelings regarding the actions and attitudes of God ought to be examined objectively and in connection with the same emotions in others. Nevertheless, with all that, spirit to spirit can speak. The heart does sometimes rise up against all empiricism, and, like a man in wrath, answers, "I have felt;" it brushes aside the doubts of others and rejoices like a mighty sea.

Another point may be made—and here is where the fundamentalist has a chance to get in his *ad hominem* argument and to call for torch and faggots. Those who have experienced or felt in an unusual way the power of God in their own lives are all the more ready to believe the wonders others tell concerning him. One can understand, even if he does not go along with it, the truculent assertion of those uninhibited believers who say (with more force than charity, perhaps), that the reason some men do not believe in the wondrous power of God is that they have never felt God perform any wonders within themselves.

Certainly those who have been through a cataclysmic conversion feel that the "forgiveness of sins" is something that cannot be explained as a psychological explosion within themselves. Such persons understand why the forgiveness of sins is written in the Creed alongside of many other statements which are impossible to verify. Forgiveness of sins can, however, be verified, and while the thing itself may be subjective, it has happened frequently enough for the Church to make something objective of it in its Symbol of the faith. The man who has felt the overmastering love of God is more ready to believe in the power of God than to doubt it.

So we reason. Miracles have to do with God, not man, and God can do all things. The documents, the Gospels, both written and unwritten, are admitted as being valid accounts in all things necessary to show Christ as our Savior. These same accounts have miraculous elements in them which the church has never felt could be taken out. Present-day believers can experience for themselves some things having to do with the wonderful power of God, and once having felt his power, they are the more ready to believe that that power has manifested itself in a myriad wonderful ways.

The Mass Media and the Kingdom of Evil

ROBERT LYNN

FROM John Brooks' novel, *The Big Wheel*:

"Look at it this way. You're worrying about the corrupting effect your editing is going to have on those millions and millions of readers. You think your work is going to stir their blood. Make them say, 'Hand me that atom bomb, Pappy, I'm going out and bloody a Roosian.' Well, don't flatter yourself. The sobering truth is, nobody's going to read the damn thing anyhow. They're just going to look at the pictures."¹

Herb Katzman meant these words. And in a different way, he was right. Dick Peters, the hero of Mr. Brooks' novel, flattered himself in thinking that he could appease a tender conscience and still hang on to his nice, comfortable job. The task before him was to re-edit a series of articles on life behind the Iron Curtain. But more was required than to change a word or style a phrase. The original dispatch sent from eastern Europe did not conform to the world perspective of the editors of *Present Day*. No, Dick, your job is to regroove the article, make it fit—build up the item about FDR hitting the vodka at Yalta, spell out the Russians' intent. "Take it easy, will you? . . . We're just dishing up what the readers want to hear. In world affairs, just like in fiction, Dick, they like their villains villainous, pure and simple, not villainous and complex. Hell, we're not saints up here on the thirty-ninth floor. We're in business."²

"We're in business"—but what kind of a business is this? The customers prefer simplicity and entertainment, not content. The best salesmen know what to simplify, how to be clever in concealing manipulation. If this is what the people want, why give it to them. But curiously enough, nobody except the editors high on the thirty-ninth floor are allowed to tell the people what they want. It is a poor business for a young man like Dick Peters who hopes neither to corrupt nor to be corrupted.

¹ Harper & Brothers, 1949, p. 99.

² *Ibid.*, p. 90.

ROBERT W. LYNN, A.B., graduates from Yale Divinity School in March, plans to go into the ministry of adult education, and has been one of the writers of *Social Action's* series on "Christian Community."

There is no escape from corruption of the mass media for either Dick Peters or Herb Katzman or any of the rest of us. Herb Katzman tried to escape by claiming that a corrupted public is impervious to further corruption. That is simply not true. Nor does Dick Peters escape corruption by quitting *Present Day* and posing as a passive outsider. None of us are outsiders to this business. Your children might not read comic books; yet the average urban child cannot escape the atmosphere of violence engendered by the comic books. Radio executives, sensitive to criticism, have lashed out, "You don't have to listen, do you?"³ Their retort is irrelevant. The heart of radio's power is not what one man avoids hearing, but what everyone else does hear.

My point is evident. We cannot banish the popular magazines, Louella Parsons and the Batmen, from our lives. What is not so obvious is the correct understanding of our common predicament. We misread the corrupting power of mass media if we think it is just the power of bigness.

Why is it that the public is so susceptible to the simplisms and half-truths of press and radio? Is it due to ineptitude and bad education, as Mr. Seldes in *The Great Audience* suggests? And why will the communicator always appeal to the nationalism, the provincialism of his audience? Why does he consider them as a "mass" who have to be entertained and are not capable of diverse interests? These questions, I suggest, are not satisfactorily answered until we point to the corrupting reality behind all appearances of corrupting power, the Kingdom of Evil.

Walter Rauschenbusch's understanding of the "kingdom of evil" is profoundly true. "The sin of all is in each of us, and every one of us has scattered seeds of evil, the final harvest of which no man knows."⁴ Our common lot is more than our inability to escape each other. Each one of us is a potential Walter Winchell or a Fulton Lewis, Jr.—not, perhaps, in the chance to speak to millions, but in our capacity to distort meaning, in the proud idolatry of our own words.

However, to appreciate our common involvement in the kingdom of evil is not enough. My task in this essay is to examine the implications of Rauschenbusch's second phrase, "we scatter the seeds of evil," for a study of mass media. These are my specific questions: (1) Why are mass media (in the words of Ritschl) a "trap" for the American public? (2) Why does the communicator so persistently misunderstand the unseen audience?

³ Seldes, Gilbert, *The Great Audience*, Viking Press, 1950, p. 136. Mr. Seldes' book is the best single introduction to the study of the mass media.

⁴ Rauschenbusch, W., *A Theology for a Social Gospel*, p. 91.

II

H. T. Webster's cartoons on the *Unseen Audience* are a witty commentary on the absurdities and follies of the mass media. So delightful, in fact, that we overlook the real thrust of his humor—the absurdities of the unseen audience. There is more than humor in the dumpy middle-aged housewife who glides around the house imagining herself to be "Big Sister," or the adolescent Hopalong Cassidy who stands at the TV screen and tells his side-kick how Bill Boyd really lives in Hollywood. The intensity with which Webster's heroes scrutinize mass media is not explained by the sentiment of "keeping up with the Joneses." It is the search of those who have somehow lost an image of themselves and are thus driven to discover a reflection of themselves—in the bland mask of Faye Emerson or in the voice of Arthur Godfrey.

In our isolated intellectualism we laugh at the stupidity of those who slavishly follow a certain newscaster through the labyrinth of Broadway gossip, or those who know the batting averages of all the Brooklyn Dodgers. Yet it is *our* stupidity not to realize the demonic necessity behind this false identification. For these people—along with you and me—have lost our own identity. What Biff said of Willy Loman in *Death of a Salesman* is true of each of us, "That man don't know who we are."⁵

Let us look, for a moment, at Willy Loman as the "Adam" of the unseen audience. Somehow, somewhere in his life he has experienced separation from the original reality of Willy Loman. And because of this breach he has no self except the one which is a reflection of what others see in him.

Only Willy has many reflections, many images of himself. When Biff and Happy, his sons, were young, he appeared as the omniscient "pal," the good guy who knew the score. To the woman in Boston he is the befuddled but generous lover. Linda, his wife, reassures him that he is the good provider. Yet is it not significant that Willy finds the most powerful reflection of himself not in other people, but in the anonymous authority of the gospel of success? I say "anonymous" because his brother Ben does not seem to be a person. Instead, Ben's visits are the reappearances of a corrupted cultural memory—the memory of a civilization, a nation that says, "You've a new continent at your doorstep, William. . . . When I was seventeen I walked into the jungle and when I was twenty-one

⁵ Miller, Arthur, *Death of a Salesman*, Viking Press, 1949, p. 131.

I walked out . . . and by God I was rich. Screw on your fists and you can fight for a fortune."⁶

After the funeral Biff remarked, "He had the wrong dreams." But they weren't only his dreams, Biff. They were the dreams of his forefathers, his contemporaries. The magazines he read, the movies, the occasional radio program, these were also mediators of the wrong dreams. Willy, like Dick Peters, could find no escape from corruption, from the kingdom of evil. He lived the lives of many of us, always finding our source of direction in others, always conforming to distorted reflections of ourselves, always adopting the self which is not ours.

Willy Loman is symbolic of the unseen audience in an even more profound sense. Without the sources of new identities—Linda, Ben, the mass media—existence would be unbearable. Willy does not dare ask Biff's question, "Why am I becoming what I don't want to be?" For even to ask the question would expose him to the risk of losing any identity (and sanity) he might have. Likewise we in the unseen audience would rather be a "go-getter," a baseball fan, a patriotic American opposed to Communists in the State Department—any identity, in fact, to avoid being left alone, robbed of all reflections of ourselves, asking the terrible question, "Who am I?"

Perhaps the sociologist would protest against making Willy Loman the Adam of the unseen audience. Is this anything more than literary exegesis? Where is the proof? Obviously such an interpretation can never be demonstrated conclusively. Yet there exists a growing body of evidence which seems to uphold the thesis—even more, to give it concrete meaning. What I have described about Willy Loman as symbolic of the unseen audience, David Riesman in his brilliant and original study, *The Lonely Crowd*, finds widespread throughout American society.

Today, Mr. Riesman says, we are witnessing the emerging dominance of the "other-directed" character. "What is common to all other-directed persons is that their contemporaries are the source of direction for the individual—either those known to him or those with whom he is indirectly acquainted, through friends and the *mass media*."⁷ In contrast, the "inner-directed" man, more typical of the nineteenth century, is less sensitive to stimuli outside himself; he turns inward to his internalized standards for a source of direction. The inner-directed man is geared to work. For the other-directed persons the frontier is consumption; he is more interested

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁷ Riesman, D., *The Lonely Crowd*. Yale University Press, 1950, p. 22.

in leisure, in how to consume. The inner-directed man is "job-minded," the other-directed man is "people-minded," interested in securing their approval, in what their tastes are. The inner-directed man prizes ambition and advancement; the other-directed persons yearn for "adjustment."

For the purposes of this study, the most significant contrast between the inner-directed and the other-directed man is their varying response to mass media. The inner-directed man is immunized from the suggestiveness of the movies, radio, etc. His psychological "gyroscope," the internalized source of direction, keeps him on his course. The other-directed man is mercilessly exposed to mass media. He relies upon his "radar" receiving set, a generalized sensitivity to signals coming from any source. *Most of these signals, Riesman concludes, are mediated through the mass media.*

The process starts early in childhood. The other-directed child, trained by his parents' words and absorbing the contagious, highly diffuse anxiety surrounding them, learns to seek social approval. From a study of current adolescent behavior, Riesman says that the approval they seek is without content: the point is not what one is and does, but what others think of one. He conforms to wearing the Hopalong Cassidy suit because he sees himself as a reflection of others' tastes and opinions. What is sought is not adult approval (as it was when the inner-directed character was more prevalent), but rather the approval of other children.

The mass communicators have taken advantage of this shift. For instance, publishers in earlier days appropriated the child's language to educate him to the complexities of the adult world. Now "the mass media ask the child to see the world as 'the' child—that is, the *other* child—sees it."⁸ The modern child anxiously solicits the opinions of Margaret O'Brien, Orphan Annie, and Henry Aldrich. And even if he does not care for Orphan Annie, he cannot escape her influence.

The child morality tale has also undergone a radical transition. The young reader of *Tootle the Engine*, a favorite among two million children, learns that it is wrong to go off the tracks and incur the disapproval of others. "Tootle" wins the hurrahs of his friends when he decides to co-operate by staying on the track. From this little tale the reader learns several important lessons in his other-directed life: "co-operation" is an unambiguous good; group disapproval is the worst possible punishment; freedom lies in conforming to what others think; and most important, subject yourself to manipulation so that you can manipulate others.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

These are lessons which the mass media teach the "other-directed" person through the rest of his life. No one would question that the "how-to-do-it" books, the magazines, and the movies tutor the unseen audience in how to manipulate others. But I was surprised to discover that the unseen audience also learns from the mass media how *to be manipulated*. According to Riesman, the average American youngster is not fooled by the badges or the rings that one can get for just a few box tops. Nor do they believe the condescending "kid" talk of the radio announcer. Likewise their elders are irritated by the singing commercial, or by the cigarette slogans which have to be repeated three times. But the communicator knows his public well. The unseen audience, adults and youngsters alike, will in the end docilely submit to the deliberate lie. The implications are terrifying: "freedom-loving" Americans want to be manipulated. What more convincing proof is there of the other-directed character of the unseen audience, than of their dependency upon the mass media?

III

"The faults of the radio are the faults of the American people," a veteran broadcaster announced not so long ago. That is only half the truth; what he left unsaid, what was more important (and more painful) was that radio along with the movies, television, and the press *intensify* the distress of the unseen audience. The effect of mass media is to widen the breach between Willy Loman and his original reality, to make him more dependent upon alien identities and distorted reflections of himself.

In the last section I noted that Willy Loman looks upon himself as an object to be manipulated. With the realization that *others* look upon him as an object of manipulation, he is even further separated from himself. Perhaps like Biff some of us will resist the manipulative desires of others. But such resistance, though admirable, is (or seems) almost useless. As Quam tells Emble, the young man in W. H. Auden's *The Age of Anxiety*—

Well, you will soon
Not bother but acknowledge yourself
As market-made, a commodity
Whose value varies, a vendor who has
To obey his buyer.*

The unseen audience does not have to be reminded; for it knows its acquiescence to the manipulation of the radio advertisers and the movie-makers. Though ostensibly the "buyer," the unseen audience has

* Auden, W. H., *The Age of Anxiety*. Random House, 1947, p. 43. Used by permission.

acknowledged itself as market-made, its tastes are changing to suit the needs of those men on the thirty-ninth floor. No, the veteran broadcaster was only half right. When the American public accepts the mass media's reflection of it as a commodity, then its faults are intensified.

I find the broadcaster's remark interesting because he assumes that there is no interaction between the faults of the American people and the faults of radio. Precisely the reverse is true. Take the case of the man in the unseen audience who listens avidly to Arthur Godfrey. His tenacious hold upon this folksy and sincere radio performer is a grim reminder of how little he can trust himself or others. (1) He knows himself to be a product. (2) The product in demand today is a "personality"; the personality market places a premium on the small things that distinguish a good personality. (3) His impoverished imagination yields only distorted images of others. He finds himself looking at Godfrey as a product, a valuable piece of merchandise. It is Godfrey's sincerity and genuine honesty that make him valuable. So the listener makes a fetish of sincerity, of the folksy friendly manner.

The resulting dialogue of sin is disastrous for both the radio hero and his imitator. Because Godfrey's sincerity "sends" him, he wants to use it on others. As Mr. Seldes points out, he can imitate only the manner of sincerity, since he does not know what Godfrey is sincere about. In the end he becomes the Pharisee, the "sincere guy" who can never confess his radical insincerity. His response is to a distorted image of his hero. He will not permit Godfrey to be anything but sincere and honest. Godfrey has become the prisoner of the others' image of him. He cannot break through the mold without losing his audience.¹⁰ So he becomes a "counterfeit" personality, a grooved voice, a bundle of mechanical manners. It is as though we saw Arthur Godfrey with a spontaneous smile and we said, "Hold that smile, Godfrey." After a while the smile becomes a fake, a prodigious fake which the man in the unseen audience knows to be false, yet responds to this as "sincerity."

Mr. Seldes describes this downward spiraling of the sinful dialogue. "The rule of radio seems to establish a schedule of alterations; first the human voice and the tonality of an individual are changed, then the words, the ideas and emotions (note the sequence), until an entirely unreal personality, lacking all character of the original, is projected."¹¹

¹⁰ Seldes points out that Oscar Levant always ran the risk of losing his audience because he would not conform to their picture of him as a harsh-voiced belligerent person.

¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 206.

Godfrey and the man in the unseen audience are caught up in the "leveling process" of the kingdom of evil. Both might protest as Simone de Beauvoir has done:

They oblige me to consume my transcendence in vain, if they keep me below the level which they have conquered and on the basis of which new conquests will be achieved, then they are cutting me from the future, they are changing me into a thing; life is occupied in both perpetuating itself and transcending itself; if all it does is to maintain itself, then living is only not dying, and human existence is indistinguishable from an absurd vegetation.¹²

Her words of protest are significant. Everything she fears is something of a present reality. Consider Miss Beauvoir's fear of being cut off from the future. Gilbert Seldes is convinced that the mass media prohibit any realistic thought of the future, and reflects only the myths and stereotypes of the immediate past. For instance, movies about twentieth-century American life seem to be drawn according to nineteenth-century stereotypes. For example, the common day-laborer in the movies is usually a figure of fun, always conservative—in short, somebody from the pre-Gompers era.

What is the answer? Mr. Seldes suggests that we fear the future belongs to the Communists; therefore, we avoid mention of it. Perhaps—though that does not seem to be the whole answer. I think Miss Beauvoir implied the most profound understanding of the mass media's preoccupation with the past. An open future offers unlimited possibilities of transcendence. This openness is terrifying to the man in the unseen audience, for he considers himself in such circumstances as a thing, somebody who has already been conquered. In being obliged to remain below a certain level of transcendence, he finds an ersatz security. The undefined future threatens his false adjustment, his distorted images of himself and others. So he will cling to the past and sanctify the present lest he should be exposed to the unsettling possibilities of tomorrow. The more threatening tomorrow is, the tighter his grasp on the past.

This explains to some extent why the top radio programs have been the same for the past ten years, why the communicator cannot vary the format or content too much. The mass communicator understands partially when he claims, "The people want entertainment, not education." The tragedy is that most of the movies and radio programs are not entertainment; yet their only hope for survival lies in the increasingly rigid conformity to the tried-and-true formulas. Once again we see the leveling process at work.

¹² de Beauvoir, S., *Ethics of Ambiguity*, quoted in Riesman, p. 307.

The downward spiral of the content of mass media is not easily arrested. Many secularists and Christians underestimate the power of the leveling process, and simply do not understand the dynamic interaction between the mass media and the other-directed person. Mr. Seldes' brand of Enlightenment optimism betrays him into appealing to both the communicator and the audience to reform. But the power of the kingdom of evil is not thwarted by a few people of good intentions. And we Christians who want to appropriate mass media to communicate the gospel have not thereby succeeded in excluding ourselves from the interactions of the kingdom of evil. None of us can escape the mutual enslavement of being traps for one another. Only Jesus Christ has broken the power of the kingdom of evil.

IV

"A mass medium must concern itself with the common denominator of mass interest. It can only keep its great audience . . . by giving the people what they want."¹³

These are the words of a twentieth-century Grand Inquisitor. The radio executive would protest his good will, his genuine concern for responsible service to the American public. But I am not hanging this melodramatic tag on him because I have an aversion to the "big bad monopolist." His words *do* re-echo the thought of Dostoevsky's Inquisitor. Before we hear the original Inquisitor speak, let me remind you of the situation in which the radio communicator plies his trade.

Gilbert Seldes has labeled the present decade, "the age of consent." The "mood engineer" has become as important in radio as the technical engineer. The task of the mood engineer is to concoct a mixture of laughter, excitement, and sentimentality. "The audience must be receptive, as nearly passive as possible; as a service to his clients, the broadcaster must paralyze the critical questioning faculties of the human mind."¹⁴ So the commercial blends smoothly into the news commentary. The frivolous inanities of a debutante, somber news from Korea, and the virtues of the sponsor's product—all are delivered in the same bland manner, all *seem* to have the same value and importance. "This is 'the engineering of consent' carried to its highest pitch; it not only induces a mood of friendliness, it blankets and suffocates all those faculties which interfere with the creation of an empty mind."¹⁵ The desired condition of the audience is not too far from the "absurd vegetation" of which Simone de Beauvoir spoke.

¹³ Frank Stanton, president of CBS.

¹⁴ Seldes, G., *op. cit.*, p. 268.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

So much for the *milieu* of the twentieth-century Inquisitor. Now hear the words of the original Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's novel. "Too, too well they [the mass] know the value of complete submission! And until men know that, they will be unhappy. . . . But the flock will come together again and will submit once more, and then it will be once for all. Then we shall give them the quiet, humble happiness of weak creatures such as they are by nature."¹⁶ Do you see the imprint of the Grand Inquisitor's concern in the intent to "give the people what they want . . . the answer is more entertainment, not education"?

Is there not the same contempt for the "mass" in the mind of the editor of *Present Day* (quoted at the beginning from John Brooks' novel): "Take it easy, will you? . . . We're just dishing up what the readers want to hear. In world affairs, just like fiction, Dick, they like their villains villainous, pure and simple, not villainous and complex." Similarly the movie-makers assume that their audience prefer the fiction of perpetual adolescent love to the realities of middle-aged life. What does it mean, for a radio executive, to give the people what they want? By day, the network appeals to the "Weeping Woman," giving her ten consecutive shows that reflect her own anxieties, that make her insecure life seem wonderful and rich in comparison with the troubles of Mary Noble or Big Sister. By night, radio flatters the "Laughing Man," going to great trouble to eliminate a news program that comes between two comedy shows, convinced that the listener will not tolerate interruption, that he lives for nothing but laughs.

Whence come these distorted images of the mass man? How does the communicator become convinced that his audience is composed of eternal teen-agers (the movies), of the Laughing Man and the Weeping Woman (radio), and the violence-minded thugs (the comic-books)?

Mr. Seldes suggests that the communicators have violated the "most fundamental principle of American life—the principle of diversity of human beings . . . Americans are not one huge lump."¹⁷ When the communicators assume that the public is a mass, then they are helping to destroy the pluralistic universe that is America.

Mr. Seldes, as a secularist, finds the concept of the mass immoral in its destruction of the unique individual, and false to the best American tradition. I agree, but I do not think this is the final meaning of the notion.

From a Christian perspective the concept of the mass appears as a

¹⁶ Dostoevsky, F., *The Grand Inquisitor*. Association Press, 1948, p. 36.

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 235.

consequence of original sin, a by-product of the primordial divorce between the "I" and the "we." Somewhere, somehow, the I has become separated from other I's.

David Riesman's title, *The Lonely Crowd*, epitomizes the human situation. For we are the creators of the mass. You and I walking down a busy city street, deeply separated from others. The people swirling around us are not persons; they are a sea of faces. They are the mass. And we are lonely in the crowd.

V

The final word is not about the realities of the kingdom of evil. For we live in a kingdom whose gracious King heals our various separations and overcomes our false creation of the mass. The final word is to point to our more important problem: how to respond to the overcoming grace of the Father of Jesus in the realm of mass media.

These are some of our possible strategies. First, we must develop an intelligent understanding of Christian vocation in the mass media. It is often said today that we need more Christians going into politics, into radio and the movies. Fine, but we need more than just "Christians" with vague New Year's resolutions about their future as network executives or writers or movie producers. We need Christian specialists who combine an intimate understanding of the Christian faith with thorough specialized knowledge of the mass media. Our seminaries should make it possible for laymen to spend one year in seminary, taking courses in biblical exegesis, in systematic theology and in social ethics. Then these laymen could go on to their specialized graduate work or to their vocations, equipped with more than the fragments of a Sunday-school religion.

Secondly, these Christian specialists cannot work in isolation. They need to participate in Christian community. What is our reaction to the spectacle of the bright college boy who trundles off to write for one of the slick magazines? Usually it is either secular admiration for his being "on his way up," or else it is the intellectual's sneer over the loss of another promising mind. It should be neither. The gospel enjoins another response: to maintain this person in community, to help him anticipate the powerful pressures to capitulate, to put him in contact with others who can check, criticize and above all sustain him in a common task. We need various groups of specialists—writers, editors, producers—who will search for a group or communal understanding of their vocation as individuals, and as a power group reacting against other power movements.

The gospel also demands another response: that we yield our present

accomplishments in "religious" radio, movies, and journalism to the judging and redeeming grace of God. We do stand judged for the mediocre quality of our church journals, and for passing our Lord off as a bearded character who always wears white robes and speaks in deep ministerial tones in our "religious" movies.

We expose ourselves and our accomplishments to the grace of God when we accept the biblical perspective. The Bible does not know of a god who speaks through a hollow tube only to individuals, as he is portrayed in a popular radio program. The Bible does speak of a God who speaks in the history of all times, who judges the nations, whose hand is in every news event. The Bible speaks of a God who is interested in *all* men, *all* institutions, not just the "circumcised" man or the religious institution.

Therefore we do not need more radio commentaries on "religious" news. We do need more radio commentaries which see the news from a religious point of view. Our greatest need is not for more slick church journals which will defend and promote the activities of the denominations. Our need is for newspapers and magazines that will make the impact of the gospel felt in interpreting the East-West struggle or in the crucial issues of domestic politics.

Perhaps these strategies strike you as inadequate before the overwhelming reality of the kingdom of evil. They are—not because that kingdom is the final reality, but because we have not thought faithfully and rationally about the impact of the mass media upon our lives. We must think and act about these problems now. At this moment over the land, radios are blaring, people are reading, seeing movies, being influenced. The kingdom of evil is in our midst. Our actions, or lack of actions, will reveal whether we are faithful citizens of that Kingdom which can transform the kingdoms of this world.

Is Preaching An Art?

JOHN C. IRWIN

THE PHRASE, "the art of preaching," is so frequently met in the literature of homiletics that it may at first seem strange to raise the question whether or not preaching is *really* one of the arts. Thus Dean Brown, giving the forty-eighth Beecher Lecture, titled his series *The Art of Preaching*. In 1943 an English writer, Arthur Allan, brought out a little volume under the same title. Professor Blackwood amended the phrase to write on *The Fine Art of Preaching*. Mr. Allan says: "Preaching is a great and very important art. It is an art that requires to be learned like any other art. It has established rules and principles that must be observed if it is to be effective."¹

In spite of these titles and assertions, when one examines the books more carefully he fails to find any discussion of what art is, or of the sense in which preaching is an art. The phrase seems to be used merely as a metaphor and in the same popular sense in which another writer might speak of "the art of cooking mushrooms," or "the art of winning friends and influencing people." In fact, Dean Brown, while he writes with one hand that preaching is an art, seems to deny it with the other. Thus he says: "The well-prepared and well-delivered sermon is indeed a work of art, yet it remains throughout a mere tool. It is only an instrument to be held in the hand or in the mind of the preacher as he goes about his work. It must never be made an end in itself. The sermon at its best is only a brush."²

In this Dean Brown was only following an illustrious predecessor as Beecher Lecturer. In 1877 Phillips Brooks had vigorously denied this thesis. Said he:

The definite and immediate purpose which a sermon has set before it makes it impossible to consider it as a work of art. . . . Many of the ineffective sermons that are made owe their failure to a blind and fruitless effort to produce something

¹ Allan, A., *The Art of Preaching*. Philosophical Library, 1943, p. 7.

² Brown, *The Art of Preaching*. The Macmillan Company, 1922, p. 32.

JOHN C. IRWIN, B.D., D.D., is Professor of Preaching and Church Administration at Garrett Biblical Institute, Northwestern University Campus, Evanston, Illinois. He questions a familiar dictum and investigates the sense in which it is true.

which shall be a work of art. . . . But the unreasonableness of this appears the moment that we think of it. A sermon exists in and for its purpose. That purpose is the persuading and moving of men's souls. . . . Sermons are tools, and not works of art.³

There is evidently a difference of opinion among writers—and even within the same writing—as to the propriety of thinking of preaching as an art. Let us now proceed to ask two questions: first, what is the nature of preaching? and then, what is the nature of art? If we discover an identity of nature and purpose, we may then ask, what is the significance of this for preaching?

I

When we look at the answers given by current writers to the question, "What is the nature and purpose of preaching?" we find the answers clustering around two centers. One group thinks of preaching as proclamation, bringing a message from God. This is clearly revealed in the titles of a number of recent and excellent books. To list a few:

Heralds of God, by J. S. Stewart

The Servant of the Word, by H. H. Farmer

His Word Through Preaching, by Gerald Kennedy.

Note also how frequently this concept of preaching as proclamation is voiced in the titles of the Beecher lectures:

Bearing Witness to the Truth (1949)

God and Man (1947)

For We Have This Treasure (1943)

Preaching the Word of God (1942)

The Prophetic Ministry (1930)

Preaching with Authority (1929)

The Ambassador (1928)

To quote only one statement of this view, James Stewart writes:

I have chosen the title of this book (*Heralds of God*) to stress one fundamental fact, namely, that preaching exists, not for the propagating of views, opinions and ideals, but for the proclamation of the mighty acts of God. This is demonstrably the New Testament conception of the preacher's task; and it is this that will always give preaching a basic and essential place at the very heart of Christian worship.⁴

At the opposite pole, an antithesis to the thesis that preaching is proclamation, is the view that preaching is problem-solving. These theorists insist that preaching should plant its feet firmly on the earth and direct its attention to meeting the needs of men. Thus Dr. Fosdick in his famous

³ Brooks, P., *Lectures on Preaching*. E. P. Dutton & Co., 1880, pp. 109-112.

⁴ Stewart, J., *Heralds of God*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947, p. 5.

article in *Harper's*, "What Is the Matter with Preaching?" disposed of preaching that began with a predetermined "Word of God" by saying:

Many preachers indulge habitually in what they call expository sermons. They take a passage from Scripture and, proceeding on the assumption that the people attending church that morning are deeply concerned about what the passage means, they spend their half hour or more on historical exposition of the verse or chapter, ending with some appended practical application to the auditors. Could any procedure be more surely predestined to dullness and futility? Who seriously supposes that, as a matter of fact, one in a hundred of the congregation cares, to start with, what Moses, Isaiah, Paul, or John meant in these special verses, or came to church deeply concerned about it?

In contrast, Dr. Fosdick insisted:

Every sermon should have for its main business the solving of some problem—a vital, important problem, puzzling minds, burdening consciences, distracting lives—and any sermon which thus does tackle a real problem, throw even a little light on it, and help some individuals practically to find their way through it cannot be altogether uninteresting.

Thus the minister who seeks counsel from outstanding practitioners of preaching as to the dominant purpose he should hold as he prepares to preach, is confused by seemingly contradictory voices crying on the one hand, "Proclaim the Word of the Lord!" and on the other, "Preach to the needs of men!"

Now the difficulty I have in enlisting in either of these schools is that neither of them seems complete. Each needs the other. The contestants do indeed pick up opposite ends of the stick, but one suspects it is the same stick! One thinks of the wise words of Horace Bushnell, who said in his twentieth anniversary sermon:

I was just then passing into the vein of comprehensiveness, questioning whether all parties were not in reality standing for some one side or article of the truth; prepared in that manner to be independent of your two parties and the more cordial to both, that I was beginning to hold, under a different resolution of the subjects, all that both parties were contending for. . . . Accordingly, the effect of my preaching never was to overthrow one school and set up the other; neither was it to find a position of neutrality midway between them; but, as far as theology is concerned, it was to comprehend, if possible, the truth contended for in both.⁵

"To proclaim the Word of the Lord" is indeed essential, but what merit is there in the proclamation unless it be understood? It may relieve the tensions in the preacher to go home from church saying, "Well, I sure told 'em this morning!" but it is not likely to relieve the darkness or pain of the hearers. Unless the telling was relevant to the situation of that flock

⁵ *Harper's Magazine*, July, 1928.

⁶ Munger, *Horace Bushnell*. Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1899, p. 54.

and unless it was in terms they could understand, it was only a discordant sounding of brass in the band of the Lord. As perhaps the greatest of all Christian preachers remarked, "Except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?" (I Cor. 14:9)

On the other hand it is possible to start with the "needs of people" and to divide and subdivide the relevant discoveries of sociology and psychology without ever bringing any Christian word of healing and insight. However important it is to give people help with their problems, the preacher somehow feels he will never give ultimate help until he lifts his people's eyes from their own concerns and gets them to thinking about the problem as it looks to God. One reads much of the so-called "life-situation" preaching with the uneasy feeling that the holy Christian trinity of God the Creator, Christ, and Comforter has been replaced with an unholy American trinity of Peace, Prosperity, and Power.

What we greatly need at this hour is a philosophy of preaching which shall bring into synthesis, or, as Bushnell would say, which shall "comprehend what is contended for" by both sides. This synthesis I find in the word "Interpretation." The preacher is an interpreter. The preacher literally stands between two worlds, two bodies of material. One we may call a body of meaning. It embraces that body of understanding which the church brings forward from the past. The Christian Scriptures, the historic formulations of the Christian faith, the story of the church itself, the writings of its saints—all this in addition to the preacher's sense of fresh and immediate apprehension of the purposes of God constitutes the "given" material which he is to proclaim. But if this world of meaning is behind the preacher, before him is another body of material which we may call a body of experience. Here is the day-to-day living of his people, the events of his times, the insights of current thought in all fields, the writings of his contemporaries. This too is the preacher's proper field of interest. It is the life situation to which he must speak. His task is to keep his life open toward both of these bodies of material, to understand both their languages, and to interpret each in terms of the other.

Perhaps you have been called upon to speak to an audience which did not understand your language. If so, you know what a feeling of helplessness comes over you. But there is an interpreter present who understands both languages, and who makes clear your thought in the speech of the hearers. That is the task of preaching. How fateful in an hour like this to be such an interpreter and to stand between the mind of God and our common life! Unless the will of God is made relevant to the life

of our day, it cannot be understood, and unless our times are seen in the light of God's purposes, we cannot find our way. The preacher's task is to stand in this place of interpretation.

II

When we have said that the task of the preacher is to interpret, we have laid the ground to claim that preaching is an art, for the proper function of art is also that of interpretation. The artist, whatever his medium, is a man who looks at Reality and sees what is hidden to his earth-bound contemporaries. What he sees he tries to help them to see through his chosen art form. If he is a Brahms, he writes a First Symphony in which the dissonances, syncopations, and conflicts of life are resolved in the grand and sweeping hymn of the fourth movement. If he is a poet and his name is Robert Frost, he perceives the significance of what winter does to a stone fence and writes, "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." If his name is Arthur Miller, he sees the tragedy inherent in our present-day notion that success consists in being liked, and he writes *The Death of a Salesman*. If he is Salvador Dali, he understands that the real significance of things is never revealed by their surface manifestations, and he creates a new dimension of painting to depict what lies beneath the surface. But whatever his name or medium, the essence of his art is interpretation.

Now, it must be confessed at once that there is not unanimous agreement with this view among artists and critics. But it is nevertheless our firm conviction that nothing less offers an adequate explanation of art. Let us briefly describe and evaluate alternative views of art.

There is, for instance, the conception that art is *representation*. Here is something in the external world and the business of the artist is to set it down. "To hold the mirror up to life" is the classic expression of this doctrine. The function of literature would then be to describe, of painting to reflect, and of music to imitate life. If this view is accepted, Debussy's "Sunken Cathedral" becomes among the greatest in music and photography is the apex of the graphic arts. It would be difficult to refute this view more effectively than by quoting a comment of Professor Tsanoff's:

Rembrandt's deep insight into character, shown in his mastery of revealing darkness, and El Greco's elongation of vertical lines to express lofty gravity or aspiration, are examples of the use of tone and line to reveal spiritual values. It is irrelevant to ask whether the days in Holland were always so dark, or Spaniards ever so tall and lanky. These pictures were not meant to be correct, but true! ⁷

⁷ Tsanoff, *Ways of Genius*. Harper & Brothers, 1949, p. 63.

Again, art is sometimes seen as *self-expression*. There is in each of us an urge to rearrange the elements of our experience in fresh and original patterns. The little child's undisciplined banging on the piano or scribbling on the wall, if given direction and opportunity, may in time blossom as music or painting. Whether in the child or the mature artist, the artistic activity is an effort to express the self. Taking this view at face value for a moment, we must note that what is expressed is never an isolated sensation of a moment. The artist is always reacting at any particular moment with all the personality he has developed up to that time. He is expressing his total understanding of life. Indeed, the critical judgment that one piece of art is better than another is always more than a judgment that this artist has mastered his techniques better than the other. It is much more a judgment that one artist is a better observer and interpreter of life. Thus the artist always gives us much more than self-expression. Says Professor T. H. Greene: "The more significant the artist, the stronger has been his conscious or unconscious preoccupation with some aspect of universal human experience and the more compelling has been his desire to employ artistic form as a vehicle not for mere self-expression but for what he has felt to be a true and revealing interpretation of some aspect of his environment."⁸

Doubtless the most persistent misunderstanding of art is the idea that its object is simply *esthetic enjoyment*. "Art for art's sake" has been the popular statement of this view. This, however, is not the art of the artist, but of the dilettante. If pleasurable combinations of color and line were the end of painting, wallpaper designing would perhaps be one of its highest expressions. Indeed, this is the dead-end street which abstractionism has entered. It was this view in poetry that led young Robinson Jeffers to rebel. He writes of "the New Poetry" of his youth:

The more advanced contemporary poets were . . . divorcing poetry from reason and ideas, bringing it nearer to music, finally to astonish the world with what would look like pure nonsense and would be pure poetry. . . . It seemed to me that, renouncing intelligibility in order to concentrate on the music of poetry, these poets had turned off the road into a narrowing lane. Their successors could only make further renunciations; ideas had gone, now meter had gone, imagery would have to go; perhaps at last even words would have to go or give up their meaning, nothing be left but musical syllables.

Turning again to Professor Greene's philosophy of art:

The artist, though enchanted with the beauty which he and others can occasion, is never willing to be a mere creator of beauty but always strives to express, in terms

⁸ Greene, T. H., *The Arts and the Art of Criticism*. Princeton University Press, 1947, p. 233.

⁹ Jeffers, R., *Roan Stallions, Tamar, and Other Poems*; introduction to Modern Library Edition.

of beauty, his interpretation of a wider reality and a richer experience. . . . The doctrine "art for art's sake" . . . has never been regarded by the main critical traditions as an adequate formulation for the nature of art at its best.¹⁰

We thus return to our contention that art is adequately understood only as *interpretation*. Representation, self-expression, beauty are elements of art, but they are not enough. Our minds demand meaning, and the artist never rises to the level of true art until he uses his mastery of materials and form to convey meaning and understanding to his contemporaries. No meaning—no art!

Along these two parallel lines of investigation we have tried to show that both preaching and art are to be understood in terms of interpretation. We have thus found a rational ground for the assertion that preaching is one of the arts. The artist is one who, in his chosen medium, interprets life for his contemporaries. The preacher is an artist who in his medium, the sermon, interprets the Christian understanding of life for his day.

III

Let us now examine briefly some questions or objections that may be raised when we think of preaching as one of the arts. We noted in the beginning that such an eminent preacher as Phillips Brooks denied that the sermon could properly be thought of as a work of art. There will undoubtedly be others who feel that the artistic view of preaching makes the sermon self-conscious, contrived, affected, robbing it of its austerity, authority, and power. However, a little reflection will reveal that these objections are based upon misconceptions of what art is.

If art were mere representation—reflecting the world as it is—we would properly refuse to consider preaching an art. The work of the preacher has never been to reflect and sanction the world that is. Indeed, preaching has often been held up to scorn because some of its popular practitioners have done precisely this, becoming in effect the rationalizers of the status quo. Such were the "false prophets" of the Old Testament, and their spiritual descendants are always with us. True preaching on the contrary holds up "the world that is" to criticism in the light of "the world that ought to be." Thus it has performed the task of interpretation, not of representation.

Again, there would be just reason to resist thinking of the art of preaching if art were understood as only self-expression. The classic tradition of preaching has always understood that the preacher expressed more

¹⁰ Greene, T. H., *op. cit.*, p. 234.

than himself. "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God," is the charge of ordination. The task of rightly interpreting the Scriptures, the tradition of the church, and the pronouncements of councils and conferences is one of the most awesome responsibilities of the minister. This certainly calls for more than "self-expression," but it is entirely consonant with regarding art as interpretation.

Once more, if art existed for its own sake, as an end in itself, there would be reason to oppose classifying preaching as an art. It was the doctrine of "art for art's sake," widely held at the end of the nineteenth century as a much-needed corrective to the then prevalent view that art should only mirror nature, that led Brooks to insist that the sermon was only a tool whose proper object was "the persuading and changing of men's souls." But if art is interpretation, no true work of art exists as an end in itself. The artist, according to our view, is always trying to show his contemporaries what he has come to see about reality. His end, therefore, is not to create a work that shall win praise, but to open men's eyes that they may see. But this is also the preacher's end, with the addition that the preacher is always concerned that men shall *do* something about what they have been helped to see. The concept that art is interpretation opens the way for the preacher-artist to keep his eye upon his main goal—the changing of life toward Christian ends—and at the same time to take his sermon preparation at least as seriously as the first-rate artist takes his work.

This last comment anticipates objections based on the view that the purpose of art is the creation of objects of beauty. Preachers may well object to thinking of sermonizing in such terms. Great art has form and structure, line and color which are pleasing, it is true; and these are qualities which win emotional response and acceptance for the message. But the best art is rugged, strong, masculine, rather than pretty. In the long run the public rejects the artist who has only technical brilliance for the one who has something to say. The preacher-artist will strive for the best mastery of structure and style of which he is capable, but only as means to an end. The proper appraisal of beauty and technique in the preacher's art was made long ago by Chrysostom, who rebuked the crowds who applauded his oratorical skill but failed to practice his message.

Perhaps this brief survey has been enough to establish that many objections to thinking of preaching as an art rest upon inadequate conceptions of what art is. When art is thought of as the interpretation of life and reality, it is seen to be engaged in exactly that task which should occupy the pulpit.

Another question that may be raised by thinking of preaching as one of the arts is whether or not this conception is large enough to embrace *all* types of preaching. It might be admitted that biblical exposition, doctrinal teaching, and moral and ethical discussion of the current scene involve interpretation. But how about pastoral preaching, the prophetic ministry, and evangelism? Are these homiletic forms included?

Let us suppose a minister regards the pulpit as an adjunct of his pastoral office, using it to help meet the needs and problems of his people. Suppose many of them are distressed and burdened, and the pastor wishes to bring a word of comfort through the sermon. But how are people comforted? Is real comfort administered by saying, "Here are three things we can do when the load is heavy," or "Trust God, it's all for the best"? True comfort involves understanding. I recall one of the first war casualties that struck my congregation. An only son was reported missing and presumed lost in the Battle of Java. The mother was prostrated and the father brokenhearted. But what both kept saying was, "We could give up our son if we could only see any purpose in it." Exactly! To be effective, comfort required an interpretation of the total context of events in which this family had been caught.

In the same way prophetic preaching, if it is effective, must be interpretive. It is assumed that in speaking against evil in the Lord's behalf, it is not the preacher's aim to make people mad nor to confirm them in what they already believe. Rather it is to open their eyes so they can see the realities of the actions in which they are involved. To be sure, there are evil men who will to act for their own selfish purposes no matter what. Preaching will probably not do much for these. But there are many who do not have the social imagination and knowledge to see the ultimate results of their attitudes and actions. These need an interpreter. Isaiah giving symbolic names to his children, Amos pointing to a basket of summer fruit, Jeremiah wearing first a wooden, then an iron, yoke through the streets of Jerusalem, were all performing the prophetic office through interpretation. So, also, the modern minister will be most effective for the overthrow of evil and the establishment of righteousness when he makes most clear the realities of our human situation.

But how about evangelism? Do we not hear on every hand the plea that the pulpit recover its evangelistic note? However, all too seldom do we hear any consideration of what would make a sermon an effective instrument of evangelism. Preaching which might hope to issue in changed lives would need to do three things:

First, reveal man as God intended him to be.

Second, disclose in contrast what man has made of himself.

Third, move the hearer to turn from what he is to what he might be. But the successful performance of this task requires interpretation. It is given to some men to see what we might be, but to be blind to what we are. Thus much religious writing and speaking is mystical or sentimental about the ideal, but ineffective to change the actual. Others are toughly realistic in their understanding of the present dilemma, but without hope of a better condition to use as a lever for change. Perhaps a new evangelism waits for preachers who shall think of themselves as interpreters, depicting winsomely what God meant us to be and realistically what we are.

I cannot see myself the man God meant
And be the man I am content.

We shall take time to look at only one more question. If preaching is thought of as an art, what happens to the concept of the preacher's call? The literature of preaching places great stress upon this idea. It is insisted that the preacher is a "called man," set apart as other men are not. He has felt a "tap on the shoulder" that has turned him from the common ways of life. Is there anything comparable to this in the literature of art? Will we assert that preachers are called and that painters, writers, and composers are not?

At first thought there does seem to be something here that is distinctive of preaching. But a second thought gives us pause. While it has not been discussed in the same terms, the whole story of art is filled with the cases of men and women who *must* paint or write, even though they have starved. Indeed, some of the greatest geniuses in art were given to see things so far ahead of their times that they, like the prophets, had to wait for subsequent generations to rise and call them blessed. But lack of acclaim and reward made no difference. They had seen things they must communicate.

If we believe that God's call is written within us in our unique gifts and abilities, and without us in the needs of our times, why should we not believe that God calls all artists, among them the preachers, through the vision he gives them to see? Perhaps God has lost some of his best spokesmen because we have not had a doctrine of vocation that applied to all the arts. Perhaps a widespread acceptance of preaching as one of the arts would dignify and exalt all the arts as avenues for a serious and Christian interpretation of life.

IV

By this time many readers are doubtless asking, Is this not much ado about nothing? What practical difference does it make whether or not we think of preaching as an art? The full implications of this view of preaching deserve fuller discussion than they have yet had in the literature of homiletics. They can only be indicated here in a sentence or two.

Most important, the view of art and preaching we have sought to develop will bring into sharper focus what the preacher is to do when he stands in the pulpit. As he comes to think of himself as an interpreter, standing between the world of meaning and the world of experience, he will be saved from delivering many inane and irrelevant sermons. He will no longer be satisfied to dispense secular comment on current events or psychoanalytical advice to middle-class neurotics. Neither will he retreat to the safety of historical lectures on ancient Palestinian life or to refining unapplied theology. Rather he will be recalled to his central task of interpreting the mind of God to the life of men.

Further, if preaching is an art, it follows that the preacher is an artist—not a workman or a craftsman—and is called to the fellowship of creative artists. It follows also that he will find help in his methods of work by studying the processes of creative life in all fields. He will find more inspiration in reading the lives of poets, dramatists, painters, and composers than in studying scientists, statesmen, or financiers.

Another practical result of considering preaching as an art will be to see the sermon as an art form. It will thus be rescued from the too-prevalent practices of fabrication on the assembly line and be restored to the proper context of creative growth. Words will be seen as the preacher-artist's medium, and literary style as his technique. Perhaps attention to these elements of effective preaching comparable to the study other artists give to the mastery of the materials and techniques of their arts might release new preaching power.

In closing this discussion, it may be interesting to recall that John Bunyan saw the task of preaching as interpretation. When Christian left the City of Destruction he met Evangelist who pointed out to him the narrow gate which opened upon the way to the city of Zion. But when he had found and entered the gate, he saw, hard by, the House of Interpreter, and it was there that Christian was shown the many strange and wonderful things that enabled him to find and understand his way. So must the modern preacher serve those who come Sunday by Sunday to the place of interpretation.

Inside Missouri Synod

JAMES R. BLACKWOOD

FROM what other people had told me, my mental picture of a Missouri Lutheran once took shape as a sort of scaly monster belching fire.

But I have changed my mind in the last five years, since I set out in my first charge, a Presbyterian minister in the thick of Missouri Lutherans. One day early in my pastorate I wanted to look up a reference in a certain volume of theology. The public library of nearby St. Louis did not have a copy of the book. What about Concordia Seminary? Perhaps the Lutherans would let me use their library, perhaps not. It was worth trying. Although I did not find the book in question, I found something far more interesting. People. Friendly people. Missouri Lutherans.

A professor who saw me browsing introduced himself, and asked what had brought me to Concordia. Later on he said that the Seminary had recently opened its doors to men outside the Missouri Synod. I decided to go through that open door and look around.

Ever since then I have been looking and listening, and sometimes talking, one morning a week at Concordia. My work at the Seminary has dipped into various departments—Old Testament, New Testament, systematic and practical theology. If the teachers, pastors, and students whom I have met represent Missouri Synod Lutherans, present and future tenses, they have been strangely misjudged by men of other denominations who have talked to me about them. The classes have drawn together recent graduates of the Seminary, pastors of Lutheran churches in and around St. Louis, and a smattering of non-Lutherans like myself. Most of these other men face problems like my own. From their casual conversation, I find it hard to distinguish them from the ministers of my own wing of Protestant life. They smoke a lot, but they don't belch fire.

What's more, I have discovered that Missouri Lutheran students belong to a community of thought in their scholarship. Our reading lists have seemed to me anything but provincial. On a random sample, I think of assignments in the works of J. S. Stewart, John Baillie, H. R. Macintosh, Aulen and Nygren, Kraemer, Barth and Brunner, the Niebuhrs, Tillich,

JAMES R. BLACKWOOD, B.D., Th.M., is Pastor of the Saint Charles Presbyterian Church, St. Charles, Missouri. His article attempts to answer some of the riddles about one of the fastest growing religious bodies in America today.

Latourette, Lewis Sherrill, and Santayana. The Missouri Lutherans keep up with what others are writing. It is only an acquaintance on paper, to be sure, yet it is genuine. Consequently the young man from Concordia who takes graduate work at another seminary not only keeps pace with his class; whether it be at Union or Chicago or elsewhere, he often goes to the front in scholarship.

Whether or not they know it, these men often talk about four subjects that bear on what they think of other denominations, and what people in other denominations assume (and too frequently say) about Missouri Lutherans.

I

The first of these subjects is *education*. "The school," declared Luther, "must be the next thing to the church." A Missouri Lutheran congregation maintains a parochial school near the sanctuary wherever it can swing finances. They have invested heavily in their educational program. In the United States the synod has more than 1,200 parochial schools, with enrollment pushing 100,000; ten prep schools and junior colleges; two normal schools to feed into the parochial system; and two seminaries. Concordia Seminary, on a beautiful campus six miles from the heart of St. Louis, enrolls about six hundred students. It ranks among the largest Protestant seminaries in this country.

But notice what may happen with such a system of education. A boy may skip off to kindergarten, and finish his course years later, a slightly bald scholar holding the Doctor of Theology degree—without once having gone outside Lutheran schools for his instruction! True, the system pays huge dividends in leadership. Many of the students later go into the pastorate or parochial teaching, the mission field, publication or religious radio. One of my friends, who is by no means an exception, had decided at the age of twelve to enter the ministry. Learning the catechisms, singing Reformation chorales, studying German, Latin, and Greek, all pointed him toward the pulpit. When he came to seminary, he knew Martin Luther forward and backward. But he knew more of what Luther said about the Turks than what John Wesley said about God. He knew Calvin best at those points where Lutherans have attacked him. He knew the intimate life of other Christian bodies only from the outside and from a distance. The system of education helps to explain why a good many Missouri Lutherans have had little contact with others who are "not of this fold." Quite simply, they have had no place to get acquainted.

Furthermore, the system of religious education has depended rather

heavily on the *memoriter* method. Partly for this reason younger Missouri Lutherans are likely to sound very much alike when they begin to talk religion. When the student reaches seminary, he can tell you this or that doctrine without fumbling; except that he finds it next to impossible to tell you in his own words. When he begins to preach and wants to quote a text, he almost always fetches one of the proof-texts from the standards of his church. Homiletically, he is apt to follow the traditional pattern set by the doctrine of Law and Grace, without a glimmer of hope till near the middle of the sermon; and sometimes not even then. He is likely to use the stock illustration of his forebears: a sailing vessel at sea, wrenched by waves, lashed by wind—familiar and terrifying to his grandfather or great-grandfather who ventured in faith across that sea, but considerably less vivid to farmers, merchants, laborers, and housewives of inland America today.

Lest anyone think that these words cut too sharply, let me explain that I am acting here as a reporter, not as a critic. I have been quoting, indirectly, what a few thoughtful Missouri Lutherans have said about themselves and their ways of educating for the ministry. The seminary professor knows what obstacles he must overcome to bring the gospel alive to living men. Students seem eager for a vernacular expression of their problems and their faith. They discuss theological questions freely among themselves. One Lutheran student said to an outsider, "Tell us what you think; we may be wrong." Such frankness gives one clear sign of hope that things are changing, educationally and otherwise, inside Missouri Synod. Results may be long in coming, but they are on the way.

II

The second problem area centers in the question of *Church and State*. Almost every Missouri Lutheran pastor has had Romans 13:1 drilled into him since childhood. "The powers that be are ordained of God." When a pastor refers to the text, he usually gives only the number. Largely on the strength of "Romans 13," the synod has kept out of civil affairs. Yet many pastors are now raising uneasy queries. What *are* "the powers"? Where do you find them? In a structure of government? In chosen rulers? In the people? Are the powers a vague spiritual penumbra brooding over the council tables of the world? Is there any difference between "resisting" and "assisting" them? Why should a pastor cast a secret ballot, and yet shy away from other citizens who think as he does?

In a gathering of Missouri Lutheran pastors, such questions raise the

temperature of the conversation by several degrees. But the word "relevant" has seeped into their vocabulary, and they cannot altogether deny the relevance of religious life to civic affairs. The two areas may not be concentric, but they do overlap.

Since the turn of the century members of the Missouri Synod have taken several hard jolts in their view of church and state. For one thing, Lutheran churches in America have always felt a close tie with corresponding parts of the Mother Church in Germany. At the time of World War I overzealous Americans charged Lutherans here with belonging to "the Kaiser's church." How those words stung! Missouri Lutherans gave their allegiance to the government of the United States of America. They sent young men into the armed forces. They bought bonds. Not only so, but the shock of war changed a large segment of their church from a German-speaking into an English-speaking body.

In 1917 the men of synod revised their constitution. They took the old name, *Die Deutsche Evangelisch-Lutherische Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und andern Staaten*, dropped *Deutsche*, and translated all that they had left into the present official name, The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. Originally the seminaries had insisted that "the German language be and remain the sole and only medium of instruction." Nowadays English claims first place. A professor still can get a laugh by telling a joke in German; but he does well to add a gloss in English. Up to the present day a good many pastors hold services in German; but they do so at an early hour, and generally to dwindling numbers. The shift in language did not come easily, yet if it caused oldtimers to wag their heads, in the long view the change has meant an increased yield for the transplanted church.

Again in 1933 and following years, ties with German Lutheranism felt the strain of international events. Some Lutheran pastors in Germany agreed to a conspiracy of silence with National Socialism. They had a text for self-defense—"the powers that be"—and no one could very well deny that the Nazi power had come into being. Yet a few men, like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, called Hitler's bluff; and in so doing they gained the respect of freedom-loving people everywhere. They too had a text. "I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Suppose a state threatens the church by gagging its ministers and persecuting its members: do churchmen then have the right to speak out, resist? Most Missouri Lutherans—not all, but most, I believe—now answer this question emphatically: YES.

A more immediate problem of church and state has to do with the Roman Catholics. For a long time congressmen in Washington have felt the pressure of a demand for federal aid to parochial schools. It is no secret who wants that aid. Most Lutheran educators have said, "We will get along without it." Although here and there in Europe Lutheranism remains a state-supported religion, in America the Missouri Synod has traditionally stood for separation of church and state. Now what if Roman Catholics jockey for position with the government? Will no Lutheran protest? Will only Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, atheists, and crackpots make a noise? Roman Catholic maneuvers have hit Missouri Lutherans hard, with the result that the Lutherans are keeping sharp watch on what happens under the Capitol dome.

As a matter of fact, the synod has posted an unofficial observer in Washington. If pending legislation looks at all suspicious, this man spreads the word. On the issue of President Truman's nominating an ambassador to the Vatican, people within the Missouri Synod have spoken clearly and forcefully. They have attended mass meetings, sent messages to congressmen, sounded off, and in general behaved like healthy partisans. But even in a mass meeting they are careful to speak as "individual citizens" rather than as members of an ecclesiastical body. While they admit that they sometimes take action, Missouri Lutherans hesitate to modify the noun *action* with the adjective *political*.

As long ago as 1890 a Missouri Lutheran convention declared their church to be "in conscience bound" to fight legislation that might be used to hold back the work of "extending and perpetuating the Kingdom of God." They have learned how to stand fast against what they consider an outside threat; perhaps in time they will come to plan more closely with others in the creative task of shaping a Christian social order.

III

The Missouri Synod stands apart on a third point, *doctrine and worship*. In its very first year the synod plunged into a debate on the nature of the Church and the office of the Christian ministry. Then their debates widened in scope so as to drag out, call by name, and quash Arminians, Socinians, Calvinists and crypto-Calvinists, Donatists, Pelagians, semi-Pelagians, Pelagian-synergists, ordinary synergists, rationalists, and blasphemers. The list includes just about everyone except Missouri Lutherans.

Yet in my years at Concordia Seminary, I have never heard a student or professor, pastor or adherent, express bitterness toward any church or

church leader outside Missouri Synod. That is a big statement, especially against such a background, but it is literally true. When these followers of Luther take issue with Calvin they somehow manage to smile. Lecturing one day on theology, a professor said: "Of course we believe in the sovereignty of God"—then looking my way he added, "only not so much as Presbyterians." The class laughed. Whatever the attitude may have been in the past or continues to be in some parts of the synod, the men who now teach at the seminary season their judgments with charity. They talk doctrine without screaming. Their criticism rises above sarcasm. These men are kind.

Missouri Lutherans are taking new interest in the doctrine of the Body of Christ. The synod has never claimed to be God's only channel of blessing in America. Pastor Grabau of the Buffalo Synod once tried to convince the brethren from Missouri that "external fellowship with the visible orthodox [*i.e.*, *Lutheran*] Church is necessary for salvation." The furor that he stirred up lasted from 1849 until about 1866. The Missouri Synod came to understand that in modern times many believers, like the seven thousand unknown to Elijah, have not bowed down to Baal. Though separated in creed they are united in faith. Moreover, anyone who wants to make communion with a visible church necessary for salvation at the same time denies the article on justification by faith alone.

Later on Dr. A. L. Graebner of Concordia Seminary defined the church as "the community of the regenerate, or of all those who believe in Christ and are justified by faith. . . ." Even a church contaminated by erroneous doctrine may take its place in the Body of Christ, said Graebner, so long as it sets in operation the essentials of the gospel.

Theologians of the Missouri Synod have said good strong words about the *Una Sancta*, the one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church. Then why did the synod fail to send a representative to the 1948 assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam? For what possible reason did the synod keep its men at home when the National Council of Churches came to birth at Cleveland? Strange doings for those who believe in the *Una Sancta*!

One who sits on the sidelines has a hard time knowing exactly what goes on when the Missouri Lutherans huddle, but this fact comes out: they differ strongly over "unionism." The term "unionism" carries a sinister suggestion; it includes what outsiders call the ecumenical movement. Anti-unionists think it foolish to pretend that agreement exists where it does not exist, by holding conferences and hearing speeches and signing documents.

They say that fellowship in worship becomes possible only among those who thoroughly agree in doctrine. Union must follow unity—not the other way around. Worshipers therefore can really share the bread and wine of communion—the vital point—only as they agree on the meaning of the elements. In brief, that is the argument. Until fundamental agreement exists all the running back and forth to conferences doesn't amount to pigtracks in the Ozarks.

Those who advance this argument leave many non-Lutheran Protestants baffled. How will agreement ever come to those who never, never talk over their differences? Do Missouri Lutherans have anything to contribute by way of testimony or scholarship to the rest of us? Is our ignorance invincible? Is their purity of doctrine to be kept immaculate because we cannot be persuaded of its truth, or simply because, like Sainte-Beuve, these good people fear "the Anglo-Saxon contagion"? Are the Augsburg Confession and Luther's catechism infallible? If not, why act as if they were so?

Obviously a good share of the problem lies in the constitution of the Missouri Synod, adopted in 1847. At that time Lutheranism had fractured into some twenty corporate bodies in America; the forming of the *Synode von Missouri* brought a merger of separate groups and unattached congregations. Their doctrine focused in the Word of God as interpreted by the three Ecumenical Creeds, the unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large and the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord. The synod was emerging out of conflict; its members put up sturdy guards against error.

Thus the constitution disavows "unionism of every description." The ruling of 1847, still in force, specifically forbids a pastor to serve any congregation made up of members holding different confessions as such; forbids him to take part in any rite or service with a minister from another denomination; forbids him to join in any kind of religious instruction, mission work, or publication with members of heterodox bodies. Some of the Missouri Lutherans like that part of their constitution. Some do not. At any rate, all ordained men in the synod have pledged themselves to uphold the constitutional government of the church. Critics of Catholicism, they have strict press censorship and an *imprimatur* of their own. Disciples of liberty, they are hemmed in on every side.

Will new leaders shape a freer policy? (I do not mean looser doctrine.) Until they do, these people have the sense to keep their differences of opinion to themselves. The constitution half explains the well-

known statement that "every major denomination except the Southern Baptist and Missouri Lutheran" was represented at the first session of the National Council of Churches in Cleveland. I sense a growing belief among men of the synod, however, that plain friendliness and straightforward discussion with outsiders need not mean heresy or weakening of principle. Since the Kingdom of God extends beyond the geographical and jurisdictional bounds of the Missouri Synod, earnest Christians should be able to meet and work together at a common task.

IV

The fourth point leads us to think of *evangelism*. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod—has grown and is growing rapidly. It has spread far beyond the states that fostered its early life. At present the synod reaches into Maine, Florida, California—in fact, into every one of the forty-seven states outside of Missouri! Expansion has come by birth rate and nurture from within the church; by adding members from traditions other than the Lutheran; and by taking in people from the highways and hedges of secularism. Missouri Lutherans have dared to experiment with new techniques for attracting unchurched people to their congregations. The experiments have proved successful.

For example, radio has played a large part in evangelizing men and women ordinarily beyond the range of local churches. Whenever I see the tower of Station KFUP pointing high up from the Concordia campus, I ask myself where the rest of us Protestants have been dozing for the last few decades. We have nearly missed the opportunity of a century while these Lutherans have been broadcasting from their own station day by day since 1924. Then, too, they have built up a national network for their religious programs. Backed financially by a laymen's league, Missouri Lutherans have paid full professional rates for their time on the air. They have also strengthened the synod's missionary appeal in South America with regular broadcasts in Spanish and Portuguese.

This link with radio has become so strong that the Missouri Synod has tried to shake off its local name by advertising itself simply as "The Church of the Lutheran Hour." For sixteen and a half years the radio mission, "Bringing Christ to the Nations," presented a speaker heard by more people than George Whitefield, Charles G. Finney, J. Wilbur Chapman, and Billy Sunday taken together. The emphasis in radio has been vigorously evangelistic from the start; and it has brought results.

In much the same way, Missouri Lutherans are appealing to un-

churched people through contemporary architecture. The modern trend shows up in the construction of schools. No more money for crockets and finials—the style functions! Similarly, more and more new church buildings break from the pseudo-Gothic vogue, and say something with brick and steel and glass that belongs peculiarly to our day. After worshipping in a Missouri Lutheran church designed by the elder Saarinen, one man exclaimed: "It makes me want never to see a fake 'rose window' again." This building lets God's sunlight in!

Granted, a person who has worshiped all his life long in Gothic grandeur or in dim Byzantine abysses may find the new architecture bewildering, a little queer. But to one whose feelings have not been so conditioned the newer style looks inviting. In plain terms, a church that builds along contemporary lines may have a good tool for evangelism; it brings people there to see, and keeps them there to hear. As the synod took a chance on broadcasting twenty-eight years ago, more than one congregation is taking its long chance now on a dynamic architecture. In ways that suit modern needs, Missouri Lutherans are striving to "say Christ so that men understand." For the church itself is functional, interested in seeing gains.

V

The Missouri Synod has come a long way since 1847, when a number of Saxon immigrants formed a new religious body in America, wondering if they could rightly call that body a church. For the most part these folk settled in "islands of Lutheranism." C. F. W. Walther, Wilhelm Sihler, and others with them had left Germany for conscience' sake; they had turned from pietism and had revolted from rationalism. Desiring to reform the church, they bent every effort toward making confessional Lutheranism take root in American soil. They first organized their synod in protest against revivalism, unionism, and new methods.

Ironically, however, the synod has taken over most of the new methods that have become available to the church in the past century—Sunday school, visual aids, modern techniques in sound reproduction, and on and on. Missouri Lutherans have changed their language; they are drastically changing their ways in education; their experiments in architecture, just beginning, but striking close to the center in a new building on the Concordia Seminary campus, make nonconfessional mossbacks sit up and blink their eyes. In outlook and method the synod truly has come a long way during the past hundred years.

Of course some people say that the Missouri Synod still has a long

way to go in relationship to other churches. None the less, their isolationism has been challenged. During World War II, 236 chaplains from the Missouri Synod ministered to all kinds of Protestants in the armed forces. (*Nihil obstat*: a battalion is not a congregation.) It would be interesting to know whether or not any one of these chaplains served communion without cross-examining the communicants on the Augsburg Confession. Yes or no, many a chaplain must have searched his own heart, asking this question: "Do I have the right to withhold the Body and Blood of Christ from a dying man? 'Who art thou that judgest?'"

There in extreme form is the Missouri Lutheran dilemma. The chaplains have faced it, and it has left its mark on them.

Numerous tokens of late reveal changing attitudes among the Missouri Lutherans. After much discussion the synod has finally established "pulpit and altar fellowship" with the American Lutheran Church. During and after the war, members of the synod have given money and clothing to Church World Service, an interdenominational agency. In November, 1951, Missouri Lutherans of the greater St. Louis area took part in the National Teaching Mission, an interdenominational religious census. Pastors and laymen are appearing at meetings they would scarcely have thought of attending a few years ago. Some of the men in key positions are looking for wider areas of co-operation, for as one of them has openly declared, "The island of Lutheranism in America has been destroyed." A new spirit has begun to move across the synod, and it is possible, rather probable, that the next fifty years will bring changes as significant as those that have come in the past century.

Since 1847 the Missouri Synod has grown from a few scattered congregations into a body reporting care over nearly two million souls; and it still is growing. Indeed, some leaders of the synod have begun to worry about its growth. Will new members cling to old ways? Will they remember former associations? Above all, will evangelistic zeal perhaps dangerously weaken the church by coaxing into its membership thousands of religious "floaters" who do not have their doctrinal roots in Lutheranism? Such a thing may happen. It seems more likely, however, that these men and women will offer a testimony that all Protestants need to hear in our time. Through them may come acquaintance and sympathy, and an easier yoke to bind us as laborers together under God.

Light on the Ministry From the New Testament

W. D. DAVIES

I

SINCE "The Ministry" in the New Testament, as indeed at all times and places, only has meaning in the light of the Church, it is in this light that we shall seek to understand it. The church is the eschatological community of God, the community of the End. This is the new and enriching understanding of it which modern scholarship has brought to us.¹ The Ecclesia of the New Testament is essentially an eschatological community enjoying the eschatological gift of the Spirit;² it brings to fruition the purpose of God, revealed in the Old Testament, to create a people for himself. It is no sporadic phenomenon, but the outcome of a long historic process stretching back to the call of Abraham or to the Exodus from Egypt (or, if we prefer, before the creation of the world). That this is true to the New Testament is abundantly proved by those portions of it where such an understanding of history is explicitly revealed. We need only refer to Galatians 3:6, 17, 29; Romans 9-11; Hebrews 1:1; and to the prologue of the Fourth Gospel, where also the concept of the church which we have suggested probably comes to the fore.³ And this concept, it is clear, implies a philosophy of history: it can preserve us from thinking of the church as a mushroom growth of the first century, and remind us that it is as old as creation. But it can also do something more important: it can reveal to us the real purpose of the church.

What do we mean when we claim that the church is the eschatological People of God, that it is the People of the End? This question can only be answered in the light of Jewish eschatological expectations. Following

¹ The literature on all this is vast: see especially Linton, *Das Problem der Urkirche in der Neueren Forschung*, 1932.

² Acts 2:5ff; 9:31; 15:28; Gal. 3:3-5; I Thess. 1:5; Eph. 4:4; I Cor. 3:16.

³ Menoud, J., *L'Eglise et les Ministères*, 1949, p. 7 speaks of the consensus which has now been reached as to the nature of the church in the New Testament.

W. D. DAVIES, M.A., D.D., a British scholar of repute, is now Professor of Biblical Theology at the Divinity School, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. This article is based on a paper read to the Duke Seminar, Charlotte and Wilson, N. C., February, 1951.

Hanson, we may express the essence of these somewhat as follows:⁴ Judaism came to regard the world as the creation of the One God, which was intended to reflect the oneness of its Maker, to be a unity. In the beginning, this oneness was a reality; the cosmos as a totality, man included, "obeyed" God. But sin entered upon the scene, and with it disunity of all kinds: this disunity expressed itself as enmity between man and man, in the family between Cain and Abel, within the nation itself between rich and poor, then between Jew and Gentile, and particularly and fundamentally, of course, between man and God. But despite man's fall Judaism continued to believe that God was still God, and that, therefore, ultimately his will would be done.

How would this take place? It would take place in the future; but there were different ways in which this future was conceived. Some thought that a Messianic figure, a Son of David, powerful like the first David, would arrive and inaugurate his kingdom on this earth. Others despaired of this earth entirely and looked for a supernatural figure, the Son of Man, who should inaugurate a new heaven and a new earth. Probably we are not to think of any one well defined and generally accepted Messianic expectation, but of a rich variety of expectations much intermingled. However conceived, the End would be like the beginning; just as at the creation God's will gained untrammelled obedience from the created order and from man himself, so at the End there would be a corresponding obedience. The result of this obedience would be the inauguration of unity, i.e., the recreation of the broken unity between man and man, and between man and God. And this is the purpose of the community of the Messiah or of the community of the Son of Man—to inaugurate this unity, the eschatological unity of which the initial unity of creation is the prototype.

The most impressive expression of this is found in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where Paul, or at least one of his followers, sets forth the purpose of the church. C. H. Dodd has summarized this as follows:

[In Ephesians the church is regarded] as the society which embodies in history the eternal purpose of God revealed in Christ. This purpose is the ultimate unity of all being in him. While in the universe at large there are still unreconciled powers affronting the sovereignty of God, the ultimate issue is certain. God has determined to "sum up all things in Christ." That might be pure speculation, but for the fact that history and experience witness to the reconciling power of Christ in the creation of that supernatural society in which warring sections of the human race are perfectly

⁴ Hanson, Stig, *The Unity of the Church in the New Testament, Colossians and Ephesians*, Uppsala, 1946.

reconciled into a whole of harmoniously functioning parts—the church. That Jews and Gentiles should have found their place in the unity of the church seems to the writer the most signal manifestation of reconciling grace. The enmity of Jew and Gentile was one of the fiercest in the ancient world: and the unity of Jewish and Gentile Christians in the one church *a mystery and a miracle*. He saw that the reconciliation was not accomplished by any kind of compromise between the diverse parties, but by a divine act creating out of both one new humanity. This new humanity is mediated by Christ. He sums up in himself the whole meaning of God, and communicates himself to men so that humanity may come to realize and express that meaning. The church is “in Christ”; it is his Body, and its members have “put on” the new humanity which is Christ in them (2:11-25) In the great universe, too, there is movement toward unity and completeness: Christ’s work will not be done till the whole universe is one in him, to the Glory of God. The living and growing unity of the Church is, so to speak, a sacrament of the ultimate unity of all things.⁵

But not only in Ephesians does this become clear. The Pauline doctrine of Christ as the Second Adam is pertinent here. Paul accepted the traditional Rabbinic doctrine of the unity of mankind in Adam. That doctrine implied that the very constitution of the physical body of Adam and the method of its formation was symbolic of the real oneness of mankind. In the one body of Adam, east and west, north and south were brought together, male and female. Paul, when he thought of the new humanity being incorporated “in Christ,” conceived of it as the “body” of the Second Adam, where there was neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, bond nor free. The difference between the body of the First Adam and that of the Second Adam was for Paul that whereas the former was animated by the principle of natural life, was *nephesh*, the latter was animated by the Spirit; and the purpose of God in Christ is “in the dispensation of the fullness of times” to “gather together in one all things in Christ” (Eph. 1:10), i.e., the reconstitution of the essential oneness of mankind in Christ as a “spiritual” community, as it was one in Adam in a physical sense.⁶ Finally, we refer to the Farewell Discourses in the Fourth Gospel where the meaning of the Christian Ecclesia comes to full expression again. Christ prays not only for the Twelve but for Christians yet unborn. “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me” (John 17:20-21).

So far, we have stated two things about the church; first, that it is the eschatological People of God and, secondly, that its aim is the recreation

⁵ *The Abingdon Commentary*, Abingdon Press, 1929, pp. 1222f.; cf. 2 Cor. 5:19.

⁶ See for the evidence W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*. S.P.C.K., London, 1948, pp. 53ff.

of the unity which mankind has lost. We now have to enquire how the church is to accomplish this. And that brings us to our present concern: it is through the life of the church, or, to be more accurate, through the life of Christ in the church. But what does this mean?

Let us retrace our steps a little. We saw that the church is the eschatological, Messianic community gathered by Jesus, the Messiah. But this community is not a community standing over against him, as it were; it is a community which is integrally bound up with him. It is so closely knit to Christ that, in Pauline language, it can be said to be "in Christ." To use the famous Pauline metaphor again, the church is the *Body* of Christ, it is the extension of his Being; quite literally Christians are to form the eyes, the feet, the ears, the mind of Christ. (The notions of corporate personality, derived from a Semitic background, which lie behind such a conception of an extension of the Being of Christ in his followers, are indispensable to the understanding of the New Testament doctrine of the church, although we can only refer to them here in passing.) In other words, since the church is the Body of Christ, it is called upon to perform his work: the church is the continuation of the life of Jesus, the Messiah.⁷

But what was the nature of that life? It can be summed up in one word—ministry (*diakonia*). "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). This was the secret of the Messiahship of Jesus, that it was the Messiahship of a Suffering Minister. T. W. Manson in his book *The Church's Ministry* has given the reasons for choosing this word "ministry" as that which best describes the public career of Jesus. They are three: (1) It reflects the fact that in Jesus we have the actualization of the purest and most perfect formulation of the remnant ideal in the Old Testament, the picture of the *Servant* of the Lord in Deutero-Isaiah;⁸ (2) it accurately describes the kind of activities which make up the Gospel record of the life of Jesus; and (3) it provides the standard for the life of his followers. Thus this self-giving ministry of Christ becomes the norm for the life of the church, its pattern: the life of the church is to be the continuation of that ministry, and, in so far as this is actually the case, the church heals as he healed, and restores as he restored, the brokenness of men. It is then by its *diakonia*, in which and through which the Living Christ continues his work, that the church is continuously recreating the unity that the world has lost.

⁷ See especially T. W. Manson, *The Church's Ministry*. Hodder & Stoughton, 1948, *ad loc.*

⁸ Mark 10:45, which probably echoes Isaiah 53.

II

But we are particularly concerned not with the ministry of the church as a whole, the ministry of what we may call Christian *agapē*, which is the lot of *every* Christian, but with the ministry of "ministers" as such, i.e., the ministry of people who have been set apart, in whatever way, for specific tasks in the church. How does "the ministry" in this strict sense fit into the ministry of the Body as a whole? Clearly, to take seriously what we have sought to reveal about the nature and purpose of the church, and about its continuation of the ministry of Jesus as a means of fulfilling that purpose, has important consequences for the understanding of the specific character of "the ministry." Let us gather up the chief of these consequences as follows.

First, all ministry in the Church, as the New Testament understands it, is the activity of the Living Christ himself; it is the gift of his grace to his people. It is no accident that every significant term that has historically come to be used of "ministers" in the church is applied in the New Testament to Christ himself. Thus Jesus is called a deacon, a servant (Rom. 15:8, Luke 22:27, Mark 10:45, Phil. 2:7); he is an apostle and High Priest (Heb. 3:1); he is bishop and shepherd (Heb. 13:20, I Pet. 2:25, 5:4). This fact emphasizes the truth on which we have insisted that all ministry is his ministry. He is always present in the ministry of his own. So in Luke 10:16 we read: "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." Thus again for Paul the preaching of God's word, for instance, is in truth God's own word, through which God himself works in the Body, as in I Thess. 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."⁹

But, secondly, if all ministry is the ministry of Christ himself, then it also follows from this that there is no ministry in the church which is merely the result of human merit. Every ministry in the New Testament is the activity of the Living Christ, so that there is no truly Christian ministry which is sustained out of our own resources as it were. There is no merit on the basis of which we become the "ministers" of Christ: the New Testament refused to contemplate any such "ministry"; none ever deserves to be a minister, or, as we more often express it, *ought* to be a minister in

⁹ Cf. Gal. 1:9-10; Acts 4:29. I am much indebted in all this to the penetrating study by E. Schweizer, *Das Leben des Herrn in der Gemeinde und ihren Diensten*, 1946; cf. T. W. Manson, *op. cit. ad loc.*

virtue of any moral or other qualities he may possess. On this basis "the ministry" is an impossible calling; it is not a human possibility, as indeed every minister knows. The truly typical call into "the ministry," of whatever kind, is that of Peter depicted for us in Luke 5:1-11. Peter is called to become a fisher of men, but the outcome of his first encounter with Christ is the exclamation, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." It is of the grace of Christ's call that he enters "the ministry," not of his own merit; it is of the grace of Christ also that he remains in it when he would sometimes like to leave it. Recall the words of Luke 22:31f., "and the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:* and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. . . ." In Paul the awareness, not only of inadequacy, but of utter unworthiness to be a minister of Christ is sometimes overwhelming.¹⁰ That every virtue and every victory in our ministry, whatever it may be, "is his alone" is writ large on page after page of the New Testament.

Again, thirdly, there is a further consequence of the conception of the church which we have found in the New Testament. Since the church is the Body of *Christ*, and since it is the church as such that continues his ministry, there can be no one other "ministry" which is essential in the sense that it is this one ministry that constitutes the Body.¹¹ The only *essential* "ministry" in the Body is the ministry of the Living Christ Himself.¹² And to take seriously the thought that the Body is the Body of Christ himself makes otiose any essential ministry other than his own. In his body every member, however lowly, has his ministry; there are no idle members. But on the other hand there are no members which can lord it over the Body. There are no higher and lower ministries in the church of the New Testament; it knows no distinction of cleric and lay; there is no priesthood in the New Israel such as there is in the Old Israel because the New Israel in its *totality* is a priesthood.¹³

And it is at this point that we must reject the claims of Anglo- and

¹⁰ I Cor. 2:1ff, I Cor. 15:8ff, I Tim. 1:12ff. So much is Paul aware that he is an apostle merely because of the grace of Christ that the term *grace* becomes for him a synonym for the *apostolate*, as in Rom. 1:5. (Here the connecting *kai* is meant to identify the two terms.) He defines his apostolate as "the grace that is given to me of God"; cf. I Cor. 3:10; Gal. 2:9; Eph. 3:2, 7; I Cor. 15:10; cf. also 2 Cor. 4:7; I Tim. 1:12f.

¹¹ See *The Apostolic Ministry*, Ed. K. E. Kirk. Morehouse-Gorham, 1947.

¹² Cf. T. W. Manson, *op. cit.*

¹³ I Pet. 2:5; Heb. 7:24f. (here Christ is the eternal priest, but has no successors); Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6. See Lightfoot, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, 1903, pp. 181-269; Schweizer, *op. cit. ad loc.*; Menoud, *op. cit.*, pp. 18ff.: "De même que c'est l'Eglise et non le fidèle qui est le corps du Christ, c'est l'Eglise et non le fidèle qui est un *acerdote*" (p. 21).

Roman Catholicism, not only on the historical and lexicographical grounds which have often been pointed out,¹⁴ but on theological grounds derived from the New Testament. The church is completely dependent upon Christ: it came into being at his call: it is his body—the Body of his creation. It follows that while the church is dependent upon Christ, Christ is not in the same way dependent upon the church. Christ, so to speak, can exist without the church, but the church cannot truly exist without Christ: in other words, it is Christ who is constitutive of the church. The action of Christ is free: he calleth whom he willeth unto himself. The church cannot limit his freedom or dictate the terms on which he acts. Any church order, therefore, which presumes to impose terms upon the sovereign freedom of Christ, which limits his activity to certain prescribed channels, Episcopal or other, is a denial of his sovereignty. To make the Papacy or the Episcopacy a necessity to Christ is to make both the Papacy and the Episcopacy stand where they ought not, in a position to dictate to the Lord of the church.

The Spirit bloweth where it listeth. It has, in fact, flowed through the channels of Episcopacy, it has also flowed outside these channels. These channels may at times have helped his coming, but they have never been the necessary condition of that coming. The development of Episcopacy in Patristic Catholicism may have been a necessary development in the sense that it was expedient; in the same way it may possibly be that in our day and generation an outward form of unity would be expedient. But the ultimate New Testament criterion of any "ministry," as of any church order, is that it does not usurp the crown rights of the Redeemer within the church: the real danger of both Roman and Anglo-Catholicism is that they imprison the Spirit of Christ in an order.

In the light of all that this asserts negatively about the ministry, that is, in defining that in which the ministry does not consist, we may well ask in what, then, does the ministry consist? What is its justification or its *raison d'être*?

In seeking to answer this question we now refer to another danger which always dogs the church. This danger is the direct antithesis of that constituted by Roman and high Anglican claims; but it is no less real. It is the danger of believing that because the church is the Body of Christ and that he is working in and through it, so that all is of His grace, then we need no form or order for the Body at all, or at least we can treat its

¹⁴ See for a brief summary and references a pamphlet by W. D. Davies, *A Normative Pattern of Church Life in the New Testament*, 1950.

form or order cavalierly. It is the danger into which Sohm fell when he asserted that the organized structure of the church in itself involved a departure from the pristine purity of the spiritual fellowship of the saints.¹⁵

But what are the facts as the New Testament presents them? Let us emphasize, as strongly as possible, one central thing. The fact that all is of grace does not mean that Christians are absolved from responsibility in the Body. The same kind of paradox presents itself in New Testament ethics. The New Testament, which asserts that all is of grace, is also full of imperatives—exhortations—pleas—warnings. Phil. 2:12f. reads, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." God's grace does not do away with the necessity of works. The Church is Christ's and his Spirit bloweth where it listeth, but it must blow through *Christians*: he cannot act mechanically. Without denying his own nature, he cannot treat men as marionettes or puppets: he demands their active co-operation. Thus the Spirit demands confession, the active response of the soul to Christ, and in Mt. 16:18 the church is said to be built on one who thus confesses. This kind of confessing response lies behind every ministry in the church. But the Spirit in the church demands not only confession but action, the awareness of the claims of human need and practical response to meet them.

This means that Christians cannot be a group of people enjoying ecstatic irresponsibility or basking in the warmth of an irrelevant emotionalism: they must accept the challenge of the demands made upon them by Christ in facing the order and the quality of their own life as they confront the world. This is the meaning of the appointment of the Seven in Acts 6:18f. Hort¹⁶ has unforgettably expressed the meaning of the appointment. It was

not only a notable recognition of the Hellenistic element in the Ecclesia at Jerusalem, a prelude to greater events to come, but also a sign that the Ecclesia was to be an Ecclesia indeed, not a mere horde of men ruled absolutely by the Apostles, but a true body politic, *in which different functions were assigned to different members, and a share of responsibility rested upon the members at large, each and all*; while every work for the Ecclesia high and low was of the nature of a ministration, a true rendering of a servant's service.

It is the same acceptance of responsibility that lies behind all the specialized "ministries" of the church. It is not that the church submitted

¹⁵ *Outlines of Church History*, E.T., M. Sinclair, 1895, pp. 32ff.

¹⁶ *The Christian Ecclesia*, 1897, p. 52, our italics.

to an order of ministry imposed upon it from above, which it was compelled to obey, but that Christ, acting in the church, created "ministries" to fulfill his purposes. That is, "the ministry" is determined not by status conferred but by function fulfilled.¹⁷ Thus while the New Testament recognizes no distinction between cleric and lay, nevertheless, despite the fact that ministry is the function of the whole church, it does recognize a distinction between "ministers" set apart for specific functions and the rest of the faithful (Phil. 1:1, Acts 15:22).

III

But what are those functions for which the church must particularly set certain ministers apart? They can be broadly distinguished under two heads.

First, there is the proclamation of what the New Testament calls the *Kerygma*, the preaching. The Gospel in the New Testament is the good news of the glory of God (I Tim. 1:11, II Cor. 4:6). But this glory is revealed in an Event—in the coming, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is this Event in its totality, by which the world is redeemed, that first called the church into being; and on its further proclamation does the continuance and expansion of the church depend. "Il ne suffit pas pour sauver le monde," writes Spic, "que le Christ soit mort et resuscité. Il faut en outre que ces faits soient divulgués et qu'on y croie."¹⁸ The church can only live by witnessing to the Event which gave it birth.

Now that was the essential function of the Apostolate, the most important and, indeed, unique ministry of the New Testament. The Apostles were, first and foremost, witnesses of the Resurrection (I Cor. 9:1), and some also, in order still more to ground their witness to the event, of the earthly life of Jesus (Acts 1:21-22). They were bearers of the tradition, stewards of the *Kerygma* (I Cor. 4:1). Thus even Paul, despite his strong assertion of his direct commission to be an Apostle from the Risen Christ (Gal. 1:1), is also anxious to be rooted in that tradition which the other Apostles safeguarded, lest he should be laboring in vain. Although the Apostolate, as such, could have no successors, it remained the quite fundamental task of the church to carry on the "apostolic" witness to the Word made flesh. Henceforth it could do this only by being true to the tradition received from the eye-witnesses, the Apostolate; and thus from the earliest days it

¹⁷ See T. W. Manson in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. I, No. 1, on *The New Testament Basis of the Doctrine of the Church*.

¹⁸ Spic, *Saint Paul, Les Épîtres Pastorales*, 1947, p. 226.

had not only to set men apart (by the laying on of hands or otherwise) to be guardians of this tradition which they had directly received, but also had to recognize the need to maintain them materially.¹⁹ The case of Timothy is here instructive. He is called upon not to succeed in any office, i.e., not to be in the Apostolic Succession in the Roman sense, but to continue in the things which he had learned.²⁰ In short, he is to be the minister of the Word of God which he has received from the Apostolate.²¹

But it is clear that there would come a time when those responsible for witnessing to the Event would have no direct relation to the eye-witnesses of that Event at all. And Cullman²² has again recently reminded us that in time the witness to the Event came to be deposited and safeguarded in the Canon of Scripture. In the fixation of the Canon, about the middle of the second century, the concern of the church was just this: to be true to the apostolic witness; and when we consider the vagaries of extracanonical tradition, we cannot doubt that it succeeded in being so. But the consequence is that henceforth the ministry of the Word becomes a ministry which wrestles with the witness of the Canon to Christ and, having wrestled with it, proclaims it. In this sense, as in others, "the ministry" is today, as always, to stand in that apostolic succession which witnesses to Christ: thus only will it be true to its specific task, and thus renew in the experience of men that crisis which was constituted by the impact of him who was the Word made flesh. The ministry is, therefore, not essentially concerned with the speculative flights of reason nor primarily with the intuitions of the light within, but with a particular history—that of Jesus, the Christ. It is called in the most literal sense to be a steward of what was in him revealed; and it is the supreme virtue of stewards that they should be faithful to that which they have received.

We must at this point refer to the Sacraments, because both Baptism and Eucharist, like the Apostolate, are concerned with *Kerygma*, i.e., their aim is to set forth that event which is the ground of the church. Baptism takes us back both to the baptism of Jesus at the hands of John in Jordan and to the "baptism" which he underwent on Calvary. Flemington is right in defining it as "*the Kerygma in action*, the means whereby the saving Act of Christ's death and resurrection is made available for successive believers within the Christian fellowship."²³ Similarly the Eucharist pro-

¹⁹ 1 Cor. 9:1ff; cf. Menoud, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

²⁰ 2 Tim. 3:14; cf. Titus 1:9.

²¹ Cf. Schweiser, *op. cit.*, pp. 75ff.

²² *Christ and Time*, *ad loc.*

²³ *The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism*. S.P.C.K., London, 1948, p. 123.

claims the Lord's death (I Cor. 11:26), i.e., it is again the *Kerygma* in action. Thus Baptism and the Eucharist are intended to fulfil the same function as does the Canon: they are both designed to witness to the Event. The Sacraments take us back through symbolic acts directly to the Person of Christ; the Canon mediately through the apostolic witness.

But since the Sacraments are kerygmatic, can we discern their relation to the human custodians of the *Kerygma*, the "apostolic" ministry? In I Cor. 1:17 Paul asserts that his primary task is not to baptize but to preach the gospel: apparently he assumes that the administration of the Sacrament could be delegated to other ministers, who were not so much concerned with the founding of new churches as with the upbuilding of churches already founded. His reason for asserting the primacy of preaching is not that he regards Baptism as unimportant, but that the local situation at Corinth demands that he should avoid giving occasion for any misunderstanding of its meaning, such as that there could be baptism into his own or any other name, and not solely into the name of Jesus.²⁴ Indeed another part of the same Epistle, I Cor. 10, makes clear how profound was Paul's appreciation of Baptism.

We have no direct guidance from the Pauline corpus, or from the rest of the New Testament, as to whose duty it was to baptize or to celebrate the Eucharist; and we do not know that Paul himself (I Cor. 1:14f.), Peter and the Eleven (Acts 2:38f.), Philip the Evangelist (Acts 8:12f.), and Ananias (Acts 9:18) did perform baptisms.²⁵ It seems fair to infer that usually, if present in the gathering, an Apostle would naturally perform the act of Baptism and celebrate the Eucharist, and probably, in the absence of such, prophets or teachers would be responsible. It is true that we have no specific directions on this matter till we come to the second century,²⁶ nor can we be sure that Baptism and the Eucharist were in every church regarded as central or important in the life of the church,²⁷ nevertheless that the Sacraments were always the concern of "the ministry" we cannot doubt; and this because, although it is possible with Sohm to over-emphasize the part played by the Eucharist in the development of the organized ministry of the church, it is not possible to overlook the seriousness with which the New Testament treats the sacramental presentation of the *Kerygma*. Very often we may be sure the ministry of the Word

²⁴ See Flemington, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-4.

²⁵ It is possible that Acts 20:7, 11 point to the celebration of the Eucharist by Paul.

²⁶ See Menoud, *op. cit.*, p. 42 n. 2.

²⁷ Vincent Taylor, *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching*, p. 236f.

coincided with the ministry of the Sacraments. The ease with which Paul and the Fourth Gospel use the Sacraments for didactic or edificatory purposes merely serves to reinforce their significance for the *Kerygma* of the church.²⁸

This didactic use of the Sacraments leads us to the second function which the church had to maintain. The preached Word is constitutive of a community and occurs within a community, in the church. The church saw the need not only of proclaiming its preaching, but of expounding its "teaching." The distinction between these two functions has been defined by C. H. Dodd as follows:

The New Testament writers draw a clear distinction between preaching and teaching. This distinction is preserved alike in Gospels, Acts, Epistles and Apocalypse, and must be considered characteristic of early Christian usage in general. Teaching (*didaskhein*) is in a large majority of cases ethical instruction. Occasionally it seems to include what we should call apologetic, that is, the reasoned commendation of Christianity to persons interested but not yet convinced. Sometimes, especially in the Johannine writings, it includes the exposition of theological doctrine.²⁹

How wide the teaching was can be judged from the ethical sections of the Pauline Epistles. Church and state, sex, social conventions, class distinctions, "nationalism"—they all are treated by Paul. And the aim of the teaching can be gleaned from certain terms used of the church. It is a building into which the individual is to be built up (Eph. 2:19ff.): or again it is, by implication, a school where the individual Christian is to be taught the culture of Christ (Rom. 16:17, Eph. 4:20). Always it is the effect on the Body of Christ, not its brilliance or originality, that is the criterion of the "teaching" (I Cor. 14:2ff.).

These two functions are those which the church of the New Testament has to safeguard. It is this that "the ministry" in the New Testament is designed to do. There came into being, called of Christ in the church, first "apostles," who because it is on their witness that the church depends, can be called along with Christ the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20; Mt. 16:18). Paul would next apparently place the "prophets," whose task it was under the inspiration of the Spirit to expound a message in terms understandable to all rather than in unintelligible tongues (these prophets soon disappeared from the life of the church).³⁰ But it was the teachers who appear to have been nearest to the Apostolate,³¹ it was their task not

²⁸ See Cullman, *Le culte dans l'Église primitive*, 1945, pp. 25ff.; Rom. 6:3, 4; John 3:5f.

²⁹ *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, 1937, pp. 1f.

³⁰ See 1 Cor. 12:8-10, 28-30; Eph. 4:11.

³¹ I Cor. 4:17; 2 Thess. 2:15; cf. Col. 2:7; Eph. 4:21.

only to interpret the Christian message in the light of the Old Testament, but also to expound the meaning of the Faith; it is significant that in the Pauline Epistles the teaching ministry is the only one apart from the Apostolate which is allowed to live by the gospel (Gal. 6:6). The other ministries in the New Testament are too numerous to mention here, but we may safely assert that they all subserved, broadly speaking, the two functions to which we have referred. These are everywhere and always the peculiar concerns of "the ministry."

Let us now, finally, gather together what we have written. The church, which "the ministry" serves, is the eschatological community, the people of God, the Body of Christ, which continues his ministry and is designed to serve in the recreation of the unity which mankind has lost. And in this people of God we found two functions that had constantly to be fulfilled, if that unity was to be regained: namely, the proclamation of the Event, which created and still creates the people of God, both in Word and Sacrament, and the upbuilding of this same people by *didachê*. It is in terms of these two functions that the peculiar responsibility of "the minister" within the ministry of the Body is to be understood.

The Woman Minister

MARGARET K. HENRICHSEN

THE QUESTION of woman's place in the preaching ministry has been so befogged by emotionalism and clouded with theoretical viewpoints that perhaps a few footnotes from experience may be welcome from one at present actively engaged as parish pastor and preacher.

We women who find ourselves serving the church through this ministry, rather than in the work of the women's societies or the church school, as directors of religious education or as deaconesses—those other avenues in which church women have always worked effectively—are aware of the prejudice against us. It is traditional. We can understand the feeling among many of our "brothers of the cloth" that we are usurping their rightful place. So did the masculine doctors and surgeons once feel, and in many places still do. So did the masculine lawyers feel when women began to be appointed to the bench in other than juvenile courts, and in many places still do. We know the scriptural passages bearing on this question. But we remember also the active place of women in the early Christian church. Moreover we are terribly aware of the lack of effective ministry in the rural churches of our land and of the shortage of adequately trained, deeply committed, inspired men to meet that need. More than all we are aware, some of us, that the pressure of the Holy Spirit and the cry of human need are for us.

Let us admit at the outset that not every woman is qualified for this important task; but then, not every man is fitted for it either. Not many women will ever be seeking positions in this field, for women primarily want to be homemakers and mothers. And always the church councils and boards, bishops and leaders, and committees on ministerial qualifications, have the same right to refuse ordination to unqualified women as they now have in regard to men who do not possess the necessary "gifts and graces." But there are women, mature women without home responsibilities and with the necessary educational background who feel that they belong in the preaching-pastoral ministry.

My position at present is that of pastor of seven small crossroads

MARGARET K. HENRICHSEN is Pastor of seven rural Methodist churches of a circuit centering in North Sullivan, Maine. She draws upon her own rich experience in dealing with the problem of women who are called to the ministry.

churches in Down-East Maine; a parish comprising four townships. I come from a background of active church life. Both my parents, by precept and example, taught us early that "church comes first;" though we were never able to make large financial contributions they knew and taught us that our time and energy belonged to God and that we serve him best through his church. After graduation from the local preparatory school, my college work was in the field of training to teach little children—invaluable preparation for work with human beings at any age level. Under stress we are all much like little children. Soon after graduation and a couple of years of teaching, I found myself in recreation and community leadership and was for a number of years Director of the Girl Scouts in western Massachusetts. These experiences were every one of them valuable in themselves, and perhaps even more valuable in giving skills needed in pastoral work. During this period I learned to drive a car, acquired a rudimentary knowledge of typing, bookkeeping, and office procedures, learned something about working with rural communities and organizing community leadership. Also I learned something—and usually learned it the hard way—about my own weak spots and failings. More important perhaps than all, I learned to appreciate and value the wonderful heroism and courage and patience of great numbers of the human race.

Twelve years of happy marriage, marred only by the fact of childlessness, taught me to admire the way men's minds work. The quiet strength, patience, gentle humor and wide interests of my husband's life and his Christlike attitude toward some difficult situations that came to us served to deepen my own nature and insight. He had a great gift with people and an appreciation of them, together with a love of outdoor life; so here in wide open country such as he loved to explore, working among people that he would have enjoyed, I feel always close to him.

One evening a year or more before his death, while I was attending a meeting of our local church-school workers, I found myself inwardly rebellious. As the group of officers and teachers gathered there to consider what could be done to make the work more effective, it seemed to me really wrong that so much fine human leadership should be expended on one group of highly privileged children whose Sunday school was already "tops." It seemed dreadful to be putting so much effort into trying to make what was already a good job better, when there were churches all over the land with little or no able leadership, to whom any of the people at that meeting would have been a godsend. Instead of the familiar tables and bookshelves in the meeting room, I found myself looking at pictures

in my mind of little frame churches set against country hillsides, their hinges rusty from disuse, their windows cobwebbed or broken, their churchyards overgrown with weeds, their doorsills sagging. And I knew that all through the country children were growing up with no knowledge of Jesus, the Christ of God, or of his power to redeem and transform life.

When I found myself suddenly widowed at forty-two, there were many possibilities to consider. I had no dependents, my parents were dead; presumably I had a good many active years ahead. What was the right use of them, and of such experiences and training as I possessed? Various suggestions were made; there were offers from social agencies. I had a call from a Regional Red Cross Director with two suggestions, one involving field work in a large naval hospital, the other involving a sort of counseling relationship to service women in one of our large Army camps. There were the obvious possibilities of returning to teaching or to allied fields. During the depression my husband and I had been in charge of a small private home-school for neglected girls. I knew there were always institutional openings of that sort. But for a while the only thing I knew clearly was that I must wait for a clear sense of direction and not decide too hastily.

Eleven months later a friend, Dr. Hilda Ives, whose life as a woman pastor has been an inspiration to all New England, asked me if I had considered the ministry as a possibility. I laughed at the very idea. But as I thought more about it I couldn't get away from it. That evening in the teachers' meeting came back to mind, and I knew that for me the opportunity to serve such churches was without question the answer to my problem. Whether it was also the right answer for these churches remains for the judgment of God.

But could I preach? I didn't know. I had done a good deal of public speaking; but preaching is not just speaking. There was in the background the shadow of a ministerial grandfather who had once written a book, *Letters to Young Preachers*; how I pored over that book! I wrote the pastor who had been so helpful when my husband died, now a District Superintendent, and asked his advice; and I went to see the Superintendent of our own District. He looked at me over the tops of his glasses and said, "For some women I would advise against it; for you it might work out. Only you will have to work twice as hard as the men to get by at all; there is so much prejudice." He was willing that I should submit some sample sermons for his criticism, and gave me a chance to try out two on a small nearby congregation who needed a supply pastor. I trust they never knew

how my knees shook! And he told me about the Conference Course of Study which I could take by correspondence to qualify for ordination.

Three weeks later came the invitation to come to this part of Maine. I asked for forty-eight hours more—to be perfectly sure—and then I said I would go. The very next day the real estate agent who had been trying unsuccessfully to sell our house for five years called to tell me that he had a buyer. That weekend I went to our former home, settled the matter, and returned with just enough money to get a secondhand car. God opened one door after another in an amazing sequence of events, and two months from the day Dr. Ives first spoke of it, I was entering the door of the little house that has been my parsonage ever since. It had not been lived in for some time and was in serious disrepair, neither weather- nor water-tight. There was no water supply (except what leaked through the roof); for two years winter and summer I carried every drop of water I used from a neighbor's well, with a pump so rusty that if water stood in the pail overnight the top was bright orange the next morning. After driving storms, snow had to be shoveled out of the front hall. None of the doors fitted tightly, the wood stove would not bake, the rusty iron sink had an open drain leading down into the woods. It made a perfect ladder for the field mice to use in coming back into the house. But I remembered the ministerial grandfather who worked under such conditions and brought up six fine children into the bargain. So I wore my overshoes and winter coat in the house, did much of my studying with my feet in the oven, and managed most of the time to enjoy feeling like a pioneer. But little by little in these eight years the house has been repaired, shingled, insulated, and made livable and attractive. Now there is running water, plumbing, a telephone and fresh paint and paper—with no ladder for mice—and I certainly manage to enjoy not having to feel like a pioneer!

They tell me now that there was great consternation in the community when word came that the Conference had assigned them a woman preacher. A present staunch supporter of one of my churches says that when she heard it she declared, "Well—I'll go just once to see what she is like—but that's all." Two members of another church held an indignation meeting on the street corner of the County seat until the mother of one of them urged them to reserve judgment until I arrived. Two members of a third church wrote the District Superintendent a letter of protest. For three months when I went down the street I met curious stares but few signs of friendliness. Finally one day one of my neighbors, a dear old lady with a wrinkled face, stopped me and peered up into my face and

said, "Do you like here?" There was anxiety in her tone; and when I said, "I love it here better than anywhere I have ever been," she gave a sigh of relief and broke into a real smile. It was the first indication I had that I had been accepted. Another dear soul on whom I was calling said to me, "I don't care for you." "Well!" thought I, "I've always heard Maine people were frank—what do I say to that one?" Not knowing, I kept still. She repeated her statement and then said, "No, I don't care for you no more than's if you was my sister." It was the most precious compliment I ever received, though to me an entirely new use of the expression "care for you."

I have found a deep and growing friendliness through these years; not in every quarter, to be sure—especially not among those who sell liquor; but each year as Conference approaches there are more who indicate that they hope there will be no change. Each of these communities is different, each has its own "feel." One is a delightful summer colony from June to September and almost asleep the rest of the year. Work here depends on summer people. Our "natives" repair cottages, do laundry, raise chickens to sell to them; the whole economic life centers around them. One man has houseboats to rent, another manages a lobster pound, another builds boats; and there is some bitter rivalry among the women to secure the most lucrative positions with the most popular families—that is, those who stay the longest. From late June to mid-September our people's lives are not their own, and this tends to develop an attitude of dependency not altogether wholesome. Decisions that other communities make for themselves are left "until we know what the summer people think," and church support lags in the expectation that "summer people" will make up the deficit. Fortunately the "summer people" are those who have come year after year for several generations and have a deep and real concern for the welfare of the community, with a thorough knowledge of its inhabitants.

Another town is a fishing village. Life depends on the catch and the sardine factory, and when the herring do not run, life becomes hard. There is a warm village life here and an enthusiastic church, though every once in a while there is some restlessness when traveling "evangelists" of an ultraconservative variety, complete with sound effects, come into nearby towns. A third town has some real village unity. Here there are a Women's Club, Garden Club, a hot lunch program in the schools, and activities which would do credit to Suburbia anywhere. This town has a large blueberry-packing plant. From mid-July till late September life revolves around it. After blueberry season comes the hunting season, and

many of the men serve as guides; their wives frequently take hunting parties to board. Then there is the marketing of Christmas trees that go in great truckloads to Boston; then there is nothing till mid-July again.

The community where the parsonage is located is almost a "ghost town." Once granite quarries operated on a big scale, and three- and four-masted schooners came up the river to load stone for New York and Philadelphia. But cement replaced granite in building construction, and asphalt replaced cobblestones on roads, and the unions made requirements which the quarry owners would not meet; so for twenty-five years there has been no business of any sort in this town. The result is an apathy which has deadly results in church life. Back of Route 1 are from fifty to 150 miles of wilderness, with a few scattered clearings and clusters of homes and much unincorporated land. Isolation tends to make for low intelligence levels and low moral standards; there is plenty of work to be done to lift the standards and to bring hope and encouragement. In this entire area there is one other resident pastor, and calls come to each of us sometimes from a distance of a good many miles. It is impossible to say how many families there are in my parish. We draw no geographical or denominational lines but try to serve every family in this area as there is opportunity. I send out 600 Christmas letters, which include practically every family with which the church has had some touch.

During these seven years the family of churches has grown from the original two to a group of seven; and during the first five of these years I was pursuing the Conference Course of Study with its endless stream of papers to be written and examinations to take. How I ever completed it I shall never know, for now without it every moment is full. Six of the seven churches have preaching services every Sunday. The seventh church is only four miles from three others; so there we do not try to hold a preaching service, but have a fine Sunday school and an active young people's group. Each of the churches has an active women's society, and all but one a good church school. Formerly two of the churches alternated services (paying the preacher five dollars each time he came). Now they each want church every week and have raised the salary to seven dollars a week. Another church had formerly met only in the summer; now it meets all year around. The church which is now the strongest of all had been closed for twelve years. When the subject of reopening it came up, people said it couldn't be done; ice had ruined the furnace in the basement, nobody could play the organ, and besides, everybody who had any love for that church was long since dead! Two years later there were

thirty families pledged to support the church; and since one o'clock was the only hour I had free, they come to church at one o'clock. Seven years ago four of the churches thought they had given generously when they gave ten dollars to missions; now they meet their conference apportionments in full, and for two of them the amount is well over \$100 a year. One church has been entirely renovated and has become as beautiful a little one-room church as one could find anywhere. Recently the visiting nurse asked, "What has happened?—the entire community is perked up." She was told, "Now they have a church they are proud of." They have reason to be. The rededication of that church was a service long to be remembered, with the Bishop and the District Superintendent there, along with Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, and in the congregation, Dr. Zabriskie of Virginia Theological Seminary. Seldom has a church which seats about sixty people had more distinguished clergymen officiating in it at one time. Two other churches are now being redecorated and funds are being raised to repair two more. Even women preachers can have a concern for property improvement.

In these churches I have found deep joy as a pastor, but I have had to be prepared for anything and everything. One day a house up the street caught fire. The town has no water supply. We stood helplessly by as it burned to the ground. The aged man who lived there had gone to town—thirteen miles away. It was my task to meet him as he returned and tell him what had happened. His wife had died the year before. This house represented not only his only security but the repository of all his precious associations and memories; her things, which meant so much to him, were all destroyed. It was heartbreaking to try to steady him at that moment and then to bring him back here to the parsonage overnight until his married daughter could come from a distance and make provision for him. Another time there was the death of an old man in a little shack at the edge of the woods. I found out when the undertaker planned to bring the body home, in order to be there to give what comfort I could. It was well that I was there; for when the undertaker came the doors and halls were so narrow that the casket had to be brought in up-ended and the body passed through the window on a stretcher—and the only people at home were a little child and an elderly neighbor. The entire family had gone to town to get suitable clothes for the service. I was glad to be able to help the undertaker, so that everything was in readiness when the family returned.

One day I was called to substitute in a schoolroom when an emergency

had taken out two of the teachers, and there were no substitutes available. I spent one night in a smoky, dirty little shack where a man lay dying. Another time there was an emergency call to take a boy with a terribly abscessed throat to the hospital forty miles away. The doctor was out of town, their family car was uncertain and had no heater, and this boy had to have attention fast. We drove about seventy miles an hour all the way, and I gave thanks for a good car with a dependable heater and for State Police conveniently busy elsewhere.

For two weeks I played the part of synthetic grandma. There was a mother and a new baby who had to have someone look after them when they came from the hospital. Her family lived in Holland. The young husband was a teacher newly come to town and away at school all day, and their house had no running water or telephone. Obviously they needed the parsonage guest room and a grandma to help in the first days at home. At another time I had as guests a mother and ten-year-old daughter when the husband had a mental breakdown and drove them from the home. So many of our boys and girls leave school to be married that it has seemed wise to give at school a course in homemaking and preparation for marriage. This has brought about an unorthodox sort of counseling relationship with these young people at a time when it seems to be needed. I have had a regular High School Assembly period each Friday morning, a young people's group on Tuesday evenings, and adult Bible classes on Thursday and Friday evenings. Perhaps the variety of pastoral work can best be summed up in one occasion when a man had had a shock. I found he had never been baptized, but had long wanted to be, and was worried about leaving this world without it. A doctor had recommended ice packs but they had no ice, and the wife had not left his bedside to get anything for herself to eat except tea for two days. So I returned to the tiny house in a clearing with the baptismal font and my service book, an ice pack full of cubes from my refrigerator, and some cans of corned beef hash!

But there have been less personal projects too. In one of the towns there was no library, but a woman was available to act as librarian and there was a suitable room. Someone had to start it; so I called together an able group, asked them to serve as library committee, and they took hold enthusiastically. They held a rummage sale to buy lumber for the shelves, painted and decorated the room, let it be known that they would like books; and now there is a fine library of about 3,000 volumes—good up-to-the-minute books—and the library is widely used by the young peo-

ple. Again, there was no music instruction in the schools; but by finding a young woman with native musical ability and getting one of the summer people to finance the project, it was possible to secure music instruction of a high order in each schoolroom of the community. These are things which a man might have done equally well. But for most small towns the choice is not between a man and a woman of equal training and capacity, but rather between a vigorous well-trained woman and whatever man they can get—usually a student who must spend his weekdays away at school, or a retired pastor no longer vigorous, or perhaps no one at all.

I am convinced that it is unfair both to pastor and people to depend on student supplies for our smaller churches. Students must get their training somewhere, of course. Let them get it in strong churches where there are laymen used to taking church responsibility to guide them. Of course it is ideal when they can serve an apprenticeship under an older man. The rural people have few resources beyond the church for their spiritual guidance. They should have as minister someone who has lived long enough to have some insight into human behavior—a pastor who has met the crises of suffering, the shock of death, the strain of disappointment and frustration, and who has developed through these things an abiding trust in God and a buoyant optimism concerning the possibilities of his fellow men. Moreover the mature pastor who has learned to take discouraging situations without losing heart has a better chance to be helpful to others and has more staying power than most young pastors when the going gets a bit rough.

Pastors with ambitions for large churches seldom feel that they can afford to stay in a place of small financial return and grueling hard work long enough for the sort of slow development that comes in rural parishes. It is only after seven years that I am beginning to see any results in quickened interest and deepened spiritual life, and to get just a hint that there are really glorious possibilities ahead. It takes a long time for rural people to give their confidence to a stranger. When the dear old lady asked me, "Do you like here?" what she really meant was, "Do you like us?" There has to be genuine liking of people before a minister is the least use. Rural people are apt to be especially insecure, afraid that people from "outside" will look down on them; and that means a disconcerting quickness to take offense, a willingness to misunderstand, a supersensitiveness to imagined slights. And then, a man with a family to support can hardly be expected to work on the financial basis that these churches impose. A mature woman of good sense and good health, who has felt the call and is deeply com-

mitted to the cause of the Kingdom so that she will not easily be discouraged by apparent lack of response, seems to me a better bet for such places.

One question in the minds of those who doubt a woman's effectiveness in the ministry relates to the differences in physical make-up between men and women. I know intimately four women besides myself whose most strenuous years in the pastorate have taken place during that period of a woman's life when she is popularly supposed to be most fractious, nervous, and emotionally unstable. Let me say out of that experience that the exacting demands of the pastor's calling—the necessity to put our own feelings aside to meet the needs of others, the demands on time and energy that come regardless of how we happen to feel—are in themselves wonderful safeguards against giving in to the popular legends about us. Without exception, the pastors I know in the middle years have been so concerned with their parishioners that they have had no time or inclination to pity themselves, and the very self-forgetfulness that the pastor's work demands is a strong, health-giving tonic. Because we can say to our people who have hard things to go through, and times of extreme nervousness, "I know all about it, I've been there too, and I am here to say that the strength for the day's need is given us if we dare trust it and act on it," is all the more convincing because they know we speak out of firsthand knowledge. I have stood at open graves in pouring rain and sleet storms, at times when if I had been free to think about myself I would have been at home in bed—and have found I was all the better for it. "Where God guides he provides" is just as true of physical and nervous energy as of other needs.

Man's chivalrous desire to protect us from undue hardship is one of the barriers we must struggle against, if it is to be broken down. At the Madras conference Dr. Hilda Ives was being questioned on this score, and she spoke of her work in rural Maine. The speaker before her had referred to the dangers of traveling back country roads at night. Dr. Ives said that in her travels she had met deer, bear, skunks, porcupines, tramps, and everything she could think of—except another preacher! I too have had occasion to travel the roads at all hours. On one occasion I was called out at midnight to go where a man had come home drunk and the elderly woman with whom he boarded was terrified. She was not well; so when her call came I assumed that she was having a hemorrhage and hurried down to her house, some three miles from the parsonage. I stayed with her until she was reassured and serene and able to handle her own feelings. Then I started home, but the car refused to budge. It was 1:45 in the morning—a clear night with the thermometer about fourteen above

zero and a waning moon shining on the light snow. There was no bitter wind, just a still, clear cold. The moonlight on the snow-covered hills and the ice glittering across the bay made an unforgettable picture. After I had hiked two miles, a car came toward me. The men in that car had about as unsavory reputations as any hereabout. But when they saw who I was, they were kindness itself; they turned around and went out of their way to give me a lift safely home. However, it was probably just as well that the neighbors did not see whose car it was that I was getting out of at three in the morning! When I first came here, the game warden assured me that if I was ever called to a remote place where I felt uneasy about what I might find, he would be glad to have me call him so that he might go with me. The day may come when I shall be glad to call on him for such service—but it hasn't yet.

There are home situations where a woman naturally functions with greater ease than a man can, especially in cases of sickness, grief, or baffling perplexity. I think of the problems of unmarried mothers, who can talk more freely with me than they can with a man. A number of women have literally sobbed out their troubles on my shoulder, which is a broad one, and then smiling through tears said, "I'm glad we have a woman pastor—I couldn't have done that if you had been a man." A woman pastor can understand the mother who is feeling the joy and pain and fear of her first experience of childbirth, or the sharp grief of the loss of a child, as no man possibly can, even if he has children of his own.

What about a man's troubles? He needs understanding too, of course. Let me say that in my experience, at least in simple rural communities, when a man is in sorrow or pain he seems to turn quite naturally to a mature woman; perhaps she may to some extent become a "mother substitute." At least I have had men discuss their family problems, their operations or need of them, their financial and business difficulties, and their need of God's forgiveness as easily as they could have done with another man, perhaps more easily. The problems presented by men who have no interest in and no use for the church are a bit more difficult. A woman cannot meet them on the ball field or perch on a cracker barrel with them around the stove in a country store. But here a woman's frailties become her assets. On one occasion when I wanted to talk with a man about his home situation which seemed headed for a smash-up, I found it convenient to ask him to change a tire for me. While his hands were busy with the tire, and he didn't have to look at me while he talked, he found it easy to accept my leading question and talked freely about his troubles.

One man whom I wanted to see came to mow the hay around my back door; another answered my S O S to put on the screen door. Again there was a domestic problem; I had heard the wife's side of it, I needed to get the man's idea. He came obligingly to take a load of rubbish to the town dump for me. Another came to dispose of a rat I had caught in a trap. Then, the chore done, over a cup of coffee the conversation could swing around from the immediate to the deeper spiritual problem. Nor do I always have to take the initiative and make the opportunity. One young lad with serious "girl trouble" sought me out. Another who had run afoul of the game laws came to the parsonage before he told his family that he had been caught poaching.

A woman pastor has a fine opportunity to put responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the laymen. Besides the usual work of serving on building and finance committees, and as trustees, a woman pastor naturally turns to the men of the congregation to find and win other men whom the pastor has been unable to reach, and to bring them into the fellowship of the church. I am sure that laymen everywhere in these scattered parishes can take a larger responsibility for sharing the pastoral work, and will enjoy it and do it effectively. Of the eight women whom I know in active pastoral work in this state, each has her own special gifts and makes her own distinctive contribution. One of our women has been highly successful in evangelism and is a member of the Conference Committee on evangelism. Another is particularly good at church administration. A third is highly respected by the entire Conference for her work among young people. One is associated with her husband who is also a minister. Since he is not well she shares with him the preaching responsibilities as well as the pastoral work of the charge. In all these things the contribution that a woman makes is not a duplication of what men can do and are doing. There is a natural place for women, whose instincts are those of the homemaker, to reach out into the homes of the community and bring something of the spirit of the home into the life of the church family. We need both emphases if we are to have wholeness in the total life of the church.

Above all other considerations, however, is the profound central fact. If a woman has a real and vital experience of Christ in her own life, a devotional spirit, and some measure of human common sense coupled with spiritual insight, and if she knows herself to be called of God, she has no other choice. She can no more avoid expressing her response to God's love through this channel than a man can when he has received a similar call. Any other avenue of expression is incomplete and unsatisfying. It is such

a sense of call that has taken devoted women into difficult fields of service in the mission field, in social work, in nursing, in sacrificial self-giving in all lines of endeavor. It is the church of Christ to which some of us are called. We must obey that call no matter what it may cost in facing up to unfairness, prejudice, and limited opportunity, no matter what it may require in financial sacrifice or expenditure of physical and spiritual energy. And all questions of ultimate reward and result are not ours to seek or question. "The love of Christ constraineth us." The outcome is in his hands. But we remember that those hands were willing to take a cup of cold water from an imperfect woman. We remember that they rested in blessing upon Mary. Should we refuse to minister in his name, or to administer the sacramental cup of his blessing, just because there are great difficulties in the way?

Two Great New Testament Interpreters

SHERMAN E. JOHNSON

IT HAS not been easy for interpreters of the New Testament to establish an objective method. Not only do the ideas of the Bible awaken sympathy or opposition; the very tools with which one analyzes it are historical, philosophical or theological ways of thinking which easily get confused with the object itself. When Ferdinand Christian Baur inaugurated scientific New Testament study in Germany, he broke away from the control of current Protestant orthodoxy, but at the cost of bringing in Hegel's philosophy of history.

The problem is inherent in any reconstruction of history, but it is particularly keen where the New Testament is concerned, because it is so deeply a part of our historical culture, and the spiritual lives of its investigators—whether they accept its teaching or reject it—are so closely bound up with it. New Testament scholars can be roughly divided into historians and theologians; although most of them are mixtures of the two, one element or the other predominates in each individual. Without the relatively dispassionate approach of the historian, no progress can be made at all. But since, for most of us, the New Testament must be more than a museum piece, it has to be presented to each age in such a way that men will find in it as many contacts as possible with their own lives and their profoundest thoughts.

Henry Cadbury's two phrases—the peril of modernizing Jesus and the peril of archaizing ourselves—express the dilemma.¹ Most thoughtful men can see that it is an error to turn Jesus into a thirteenth-century friar or an American advertising man, or to insist that modern Christians adopt the entire world-view of Palestinian Jews in the first century. But the problem is more difficult to deal with when a great historian like

¹ I refer to H. J. Cadbury, *The Peril of Modernizing Jesus* (Macmillan, 1937), and to the same scholar's paper, "The Peril of Archaizing Ourselves," presented to the Society of Biblical Literature on December 29, 1948.

SHERMAN E. JOHNSON, B.D., S.T.M., Ph.D., is Dean of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley 9, California. He gives us an orientation in the field of contemporary European New Testament scholarship, centering around two books by Bultmann and Windisch recently published in English.

Harnack climaxes his studies with an interpretation of Jesus which is influenced by the prevailing liberal theology. It is not so surprising that theologians like Inge and Temple each find the Fourth Gospel congenial to their respective philosophies; but Bultmann, a New Testament specialist, harmonizes it with a philosophical system radically different from the other two!

If modernization is a subtle danger, it is equally possible to be skewed in the other direction. Oscar Cullman, in his book *Christ and Time*, puts his finger accurately on the fundamental eschatology of the early Church, living as it did between V-Day and the consummation of all things. The question then arises whether his linear time-scheme is fundamental to the New Testament religion or a symbol of something that in our own day we might express differently. Albert Schweitzer has asked whether Jesus' outlook must not always be somewhat foreign to our own. As a historian, he described an eschatology he could not accept—and perhaps exaggerated it; as a liberal theologian, he sought and believed he found a point of contact between Jesus' faith and ours.

Twentieth-century scholarship has made progressive strides toward objectivity. Johannes Weiss furnishes a good example. As a consistent eschatologist, he handled the sources better than Schweitzer. In telling the story of early Christianity, he and other historians of religion shook off the notion that the Apostolic Age was a time of pristine doctrinal purity and traced the lines of connection between it and the later periods. But, from 1917 on, the need for positive theology was so imperative that almost no one in Germany could escape the task of building a New Testament theology, and we have arrived at the same point in America. All the great investigators strive for objectivity; all one can say is that some follow a stricter historical line, while others are more deeply involved in their chosen theologies.

The distinction can be seen in two rich and distinguished German works whose translations appeared in 1951—Hans Windisch's *The Meaning of the Sermon on the Mount*² and the first volume of Rudolf Bultmann's *Theology of the New Testament*.³ Both are indispensable to the serious student and are accurately and attractively translated. And they are the products of first-rate minds.

² Translated by S. MacLean Gilmour. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1951, pp. 224. \$4.00.

³ Translated by Kendrick Grobel. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951, pp. x-366. \$3.50. Grobel knows Bultmann's thought and style so thoroughly that this is an unusually subtle and accurate translation. He does not hesitate to coin or revive words, such as "rightwise" to represent *rechtfertigen*, so as to bring out all the nuances of the German.

I

The great struggle of New Testament study, in its first hundred years, was to establish itself as an autonomous discipline. The New Testament had to be allowed to speak for itself and to teach lessons to the theologians. Then, after the First World War, the new wind from Kierkegaard and Barth swung the sail round, and the boom knocked over some of the passengers in the boat before they had quite braced themselves against the previous breeze.

Windisch was alarmed by this trend. He regarded Karl Barth's *Epistle to the Romans*, and to a lesser degree the work of Bultmann, Dibelius, and Lohmeyer, as a "deliberate modernization" of the Bible, by which its ideas were transposed into a modern system of philosophy. Therefore he sought to distinguish between historical exegesis, theological exegesis, and biblical theology, and to lay down principles by which each branch of study might fulfill its legitimate task. Strict historical exegesis is the indispensable basis for the others. With its help, the theological exegete—who is the church's man and accepts its faith—can criticize and correct the traditional assumptions of creeds and theologies and penetrate behind the Bible's statements to its underlying principles. Finally, after having made a fresh discovery of the testimony of the Bible, he must relate it to the present situation. "The theologian . . . has to transpose the Bible out of its own time into the present and confront the present with it" (p. 166).

Biblical theology is the next stage beyond. Its relation to the history of biblical religion is identical with the relation which theological exegesis bears to historical exegesis. That is to say, while theological exegesis deals with individual passages, biblical theology works on a broader canvas, that of the New Testament as a whole. It endeavors to grasp the meaning of the Bible as an entirety in all its depth "and to fashion out of it a witness of God and of his revelation that will be intelligible to the man of our own time who is in search for God" (p. 160).

Windisch carefully applies these principles to the interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount. First, however, he surveys and criticizes the various attempts that have been made to get at the essential meaning of the Sermon and to apply it to modern life.

Is the Sermon a practical law? Wilhelm Herrmann's answer has been exceedingly influential in prewar Germany and the English-speaking nations: the teaching of Jesus is an *ethical ideal*. Jesus could not have

given legalistic regulations valid for all men everywhere. At any time, his followers may find the commandments binding upon themselves, but they are really illustrations of a new set of the mind and will, a new and converted personality. As Windisch says, Herrmann apparently assumed (a) that the commandments cannot be fulfilled literally, but (b) that they must have validity within our own situation.

Tolstoy, and many "sect-type" Christians, deny the first of these assumptions and affirm the second. Jesus' commands are a rigorous and radical but *practicable law*, to be taken literally and applied in modern situations, even if this requires one to defy the social order. Friedrich Naumann agreed with Tolstoy that the demands of the Sermon must be understood literally, but, since it is impossible for us to fulfill them in our own situation, they cannot have authority for us.

Neo-orthodox interpreters, such as Carl Stange and Gerhard Kittel, have a still different set of axioms: Jesus' demands represent the will of God and are absolutely binding on us; but we cannot fulfill them. The purpose of the Sermon is therefore to destroy our shallow optimism and throw us into despair. The only solution, as Kittel says, is forgiveness through the Cross of Christ.

There is one other type of solution, that of traditional Catholicism. Certain of the commandments are practically impossible for the average person to fulfill. These are only for the "perfect," who adopt the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Dibelius and Bultmann, the fathers of form criticism, like Windisch, were concerned to find a way through this maze. Dibelius saw the revised edition of Windisch's book through the press, and in his own study of the problem took note of Windisch's criticisms.⁴ Like Herrmann and Naumann, he wished to ask what the Sermon had to teach a modern Christian as a citizen and a member of society. He realized, as Tolstoy did not, that a modern cannot completely detach himself from society; and the tragedy was heightened by the fact that, as he said (p. 140), "What the rulers now demand is collaboration." Since the commands of Jesus can be fulfilled only in the Kingdom of God, Christians cannot perform them completely. But they can be transformed by them, and they too, in their own way, can perform signs of the Kingdom.

Bultmann less obviously, but none the less truly, is moved by the problem of the Christian in society. He regards the ethical teaching of

⁴ M. Dibelius, *The Sermon on the Mount*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940.

Jesus (rightly, says Windisch) as a radical ethic of obedience. Yet the sayings are not concrete ethical demands or generally valid ethical regulations. The antitheses (which contain the formula, "But I say unto you") are extreme examples of a general truth, namely that God demands of man, not that he satisfy an external authority but simply that he be completely obedient. According to Bultmann—though Windisch does not explain this—the word of God, the demand of God, meets man daily as a crisis calling for decision, and it is only through faith and the obedience of faith that he finds guidance. This point comes out clearly in Bultmann's *Theology of the New Testament*. To Windisch this is all modernization, and he remarks, somewhat acidly, that Bultmann's postulates seem to be: (a) Jesus cannot have taught something that is no longer understood or accepted in Heidelberg and Marburg; (b) we cannot carry out the commandments as they stand.

II

Windisch now begins his historical exegesis of the Sermon on the Mount by looking at it as a whole. It is eschatological: the Kingdom of God is conceived of as near at hand, and the demands of the Sermon are addressed to those who would enter it. It is also legal: it is intended to improve upon and fulfill the Law of Moses. While elements of promise as well as of demand are present, the latter are primary. "The Sermon on the Mount is not propaedeutics for a gospel for sinners. It is Christ's ethic of obedience and of judgment" (p. 171). In this Tolstoy was correct.

A compilation of sayings may, of course, have a point of view different from that of the materials contained in it. Thus although the Sermon is eschatological, many of its most striking and familiar passages are formulated without any regard to this coming event—for example, the sayings on lust and adultery, the prohibitions of divorce, oaths and revenge, the command to love one's enemies, the mote and the beam, and the Golden Rule (p. 30). Most of these belong to a strand in Jesus' teaching related to the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. The eschatological and wisdom elements are not, however, in disharmony. Jesus' radical demand does not rest on the imminence of the judgment but on his idea of God and his character (p. 40).

The individual sayings—and this is the really important point—are as legal in their approach as the Sermon itself. A few (Matt. 5:18f.) could have been pronounced by an orthodox rabbi; several more (5:17;

7:12) represent "liberal Judaism." "The basic idea of all religious legalism, that there is a command of God to which we must submit in unconditional obedience, actually receives its purest formulation in such sayings" (p. 77). Even the utterances that point in a "Marcionite" direction, and involve the abrogation of large parts of the Torah (e.g., the antitheses of 5:21-48), do not desert the principle of law itself. The radicalism of the sayings is not foreign to Jewish ethics, and many of them can be paralleled in the rabbis.

What, then, is Jesus' relation to the Law? At one point Windisch explains that Jesus' controversy with the scribes had to do with interpretation and application, with the relative importance of certain laws, the validity of individual prescriptions, and the authority of the oral Law (p. 101). But he goes further and remarks that for Jesus "Law" is a parable of the morality that God requires (p. 79). In other words, the Old Testament contains a law and demand of God which Jesus seeks to disclose and clarify. While recognizing that some of Jesus' sayings and parables (Matt. 5:3, 6; the Prodigal Son; the Pharisee and the Publican) point in the direction of Paul's attitude to the Law, Windisch regards these as only peripheral in the Sermon. If man is willing, he can hear God's command and obey it. Jesus' radicalism, and his confidence that obedience is possible, are explained by his overwhelming sense of having been apprehended by God (p. 103). By a miracle God can change even the heart of the Rich Man and bring him into the Kingdom. Jesus himself was able to drink the cup of suffering after the prayer in Gethsemane.

One wonders if Windisch's concentration on the Sermon did not lead him to forget that it is, after all, only a compilation of Jesus' sayings. It has a predominantly legal aspect because its compiler thought in terms of obedience to commandments. In Jesus' teaching as a whole, the legal element is still prominent but other features hold it in balance. The sayings on repentance, and such parables as the Great Supper, proclaim the Good News of the outreach of God. Then, too, if for Jesus Law is a parable of morality, Law does not mean for him what it did for the rabbis. Once again we approach the idea of a law written in the hearts of men. What is occasional and peripheral in rabbinic literature is central in Jesus' teaching.

When Windisch finally turns to theological exegesis, he seems to have such thoughts in mind. He agrees with other moderns that if our salvation depends on literal fulfillment of Jesus' ethic of obedience, we are almost

certain to be condemned. One way out would be to bring the Pauline gospel in at this point. But the Sermon itself contains suggestions of a way of salvation. The Beatitudes promise righteousness, a pure heart, fellowship with God, and even a filial relationship to him (pp. 177f.). "When the content of the Sermon is carefully examined, we discover a sphere of the grace of God and of fellowship with God to which its imperatives can be organically related" (pp. 187f.).

There remains the problem of our involvement in the society around us. The Sermon is not hostile to the world or civilization in any strict sense of the word, but Jesus simply does not recognize the duties and responsibilities imposed on us by participation in society. Modern Christians do not believe that they can permit society and the state to be autonomous; it is impossible to put one's personal life in one compartment and one's political life in another, or to escape from society. Thus Windisch arrives at a solution similar to that of Herrmann and Dibelius: we must express Jesus' religious attitude in a way appropriate to our own situation.

The difference is that, unlike Herrmann, Windisch regards the solution as our own, not that of Jesus or the Sermon on the Mount. The facts about Jesus' teaching are one thing; our application of the teaching, and our theological reconstructions, are something else.

III

Bultmann's book is a full-length treatise on New Testament theology. The present volume contains chapters on the teaching of Jesus as a presupposition for New Testament theology; on the primitive Kerygma; on the Kerygma of early Gentile Christianity; and on the theology of Paul. The final volume, which is yet to appear, will deal with Johannine theology and the development which led to the ancient Church.

Like his other works, his *Theology of the New Testament* is marked by massive scholarship, incisive penetration, and extraordinary vigor and freshness. It also betrays a definite philosophical point of view—that of Heidegger's existentialism—and a concern for the relevance of the New Testament message. Even those who disagree with Bultmann have much to learn from him, and it is not surprising that, like Barth, he has caught the imagination of young European intellectuals.

Chapters II and III, on "The Kerygma of the Earliest Church" and "The Kerygma of the Hellenistic Church aside from Paul," are brilliant examples of historical criticism in the great tradition, which parallel and

supplement the work of Lake and Jackson and Johannes Weiss. Bultmann attempts the difficult feat of separating Paul's own contribution from the Gentile Christian ideas reflected in his letters. The latter, together with data from Acts and inferences from sources of later date, furnish the materials for his reconstruction. He shows how certain issues which faced the early Church laid the groundwork for developments of the post-apostolic period. Since his peculiar philosophical point of view has no particular reason to enter in here, it is absent.

The Theology of Paul is the subject of Part Two. For Bultmann, as for Luther, the great Apostle seems to be the key to the New Testament, and this portion of the work is obviously a labor of love. For the most part, it is a fresh and thorough analysis of Pauline words, concepts and doctrines which every student of the New Testament will find illuminating. The sections on the anthropological terms *soma*, *psyche*, *pneuma*, etc., and on flesh, sin and death, are as convenient and helpful as any treatment available to the English reader. Bultmann's discussions of faith, justification and righteousness are a definite contribution to knowledge. It is interesting that he emphasizes obedience as one of the aspects of faith (pp. 314-17). Righteousness does not denote the ethical quality of a man but his relation to God. It is not that God regards him "as if" he were righteous; he *is* righteous in the forensic sense (pp. 276f.).

In all this Bultmann stands independent of Protestant orthodoxy and "modernization." Some of his judgments on the history of New Testament religion are, however, open to debate. For example, he assumes that the "original sin" idea of Rom. 5:12-19 is under the influence of a "gnostic" myth (p. 251), and that Christ's death is described by analogy with the death of a divinity of the mystery religions (p. 298). These are possible conjectures; but we have no evidence that gnostic systems were already in existence or that there is a genetic connection between the mystery religions and Paul.⁵

The twofold basis of Bultmann's theology—the Pauline letters and existential philosophy—is not surprising, since existentialism is a secular development of ideas whose origin is in the New Testament itself. Both Paul and the Fourth Gospel contain the principle of living by faith, the demand for decision and for the acceptance of ethical responsibility. The only question is how far the existential philosophy can be used to illuminate

⁵ See A. D. Nock's review of R. Bultmann, *Das Urchristentum im Rahmen der antiken Religionen*, in *Nuntius*, No. 5 (1951), cols. 35-40.

New Testament ideas. Can it be applied to the synoptic material as well as to Paul and John, and does it explain all the essentials of Paul's theology? *

At any rate, this philosophy affects both the organization of the book and its treatment of details. The titles of the two chapters on Paul—"Man Prior to the Revelation of Faith" and "Man Under Faith"—reflect the current preoccupation of theology with the doctrine of man. Bultmann frequently uses the word "existence" in the new technical sense (e.g., pp. 253, 258). One cannot object to this. But he finds that much of Paul's theology, including his idea of faith, has to do with man's relation to himself (pp. 196f., 324). Life according to the flesh—the sphere of the natural-earthly—"is the world out of which a man thinks he derives his life and by means of which he thinks he maintains it" (p. 239). The meaning of Rom. 5:13f. is that "everyone exists in a world in which each looks out for himself. . . . Paul, it is true, never expounds this train of thought, but our right to develop it for the understanding of his statements is suggested by his conception of 'world'" (p. 253). Correspondingly, "Faith's obedient submission . . . is the surrender of man's understanding of himself, in which he lives 'unto himself'" (p. 330). Decision is an equally prominent theme. "*The salvation-occurrence is nowhere present except in the proclaiming, accosting, demanding and promising word of preaching.*" The word "accosts the hearer and compels him to decide for or against it" (p. 302). These are no doubt legitimate reflections on Pauline theology, but are they the ideas of Paul?

We find, moreover, that in the first chapter many of the same ideas are attributed to Jesus. Not only does Jesus proclaim the end of the age; "man is desecularized by God's direct pronouncement to him, which tears him out of all security of any kind and places him at the brink of the End" (p. 25). Bultmann agrees with Windisch that Jesus' eschatology and ethics form a unity (p. 20), but the will of God can have nothing to do with Law; Jesus protested against legalism because it resulted in outward conformity. "Radical obedience is only possible when a man understands the demand and affirms it from within himself" (p. 12). For Bultmann "law" is an evil word that cannot describe Jesus' teaching. The *content* of God's will

* See A. N. Wilder, "Mythology and the New Testament," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXIX (1950), 113-127, a review of H. W. Bartsch, ed., *Kerygma and Mythos* (Hamburg, 1948); J. H. Ottwell, "Neo-Orthodoxy and Biblical Research," *Harvard Theological Review*, XLIII (1950), 145-57, esp. pp. 149-154; and especially Kendrick Grobel's defense of Bultmann, "Bultmann's Problem of New Testament Mythology," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXX (1951), 99-103.

is reduced almost to the vanishing point. The essence of obedience is the readiness to decide and act. "Only he is ready for salvation who *in the concrete moment* [italics mine] decides for that demand of God which confronts him in the person of his neighbor" (p. 20). And this must be de-historized man, naked of all worldly security (p. 25).

The present reviewer agrees with Windisch that this is not the theology of the New Testament but a theology based on the New Testament. One is left with the impression that Bultmann has seen one aspect, but only one aspect, of Jesus' teachings. Jesus is not as modern, systematic, and one-sided as this; he calls for decision and allegiance to the will of God, but (despite Bultmann's form-critical analysis) he is also something of a sage and teacher of the Law, nurtured in the finest tradition of the Old Testament. One thing more can be said of Bultmann: he follows his own principles. He is not one of those scholars who reserve judgment and always halt between two opinions. He is incisive and decisive, and ready to stand up and defend his positions.

Book Reviews

Christ and Culture. By H. RICHARD NIEBUHR. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951. x-259 pp. \$3.50.

It is only during the present century that Christians have become fully aware of the problem of culture as one of the determining factors in religion no less than in secular development. But during the last thirty years it has come to occupy an increasingly important place in the thought of contemporary theologians and apologists. Dr. Richard Niebuhr is however the first to attempt a broad survey of the whole field of discussion and to compare the different answers that have been given throughout the ages to the relevance of the person and teaching of Jesus Christ to the world of human culture.

For though we have acquired a new awareness of the nature and meaning of culture, the problem of Christianity and civilization is by no means a new one. It was implicit from the beginning in the conception of the World and the Kingdom of God and in the conflict between Christianity and the pagan society of the Roman Empire. It is a perennial problem which re-emerges in every age in a new form, and the importance of the new sociological concept of culture is that it makes it possible for us to analyze the problem more completely and to eliminate many of the misunderstandings which have been such a fruitful source of confusion in the past. Dr. Niebuhr is well qualified for a work of this kind, since he is fully aware of the complexity of the issues that are involved and is able to study and compare the different Christian answers to the problem in a singularly objective and disinterested spirit.

He classifies these attempted solutions into five main types, two of which are dualistic and three unitary. In the first place there is the view which emphasizes and exaggerates the opposition between Christianity and culture, a view which is represented by Tertullian in the past and by Tolstoy in modern times.

Secondly, there is the contrary position which entirely rejects this antithesis of Christ and culture, and refuses to see any conflict between the spirit of Christianity and the higher traditions of human culture. The classical representatives of this view are the Gnostics in the early church, Abelard in the Middle Ages, and Ritschl and the Liberal Protestants (whom he terms culture-Protestants) in modern times.

The third solution is the synthesis of Christ with culture, which does not however deny the essentially supernatural character of the Christian life. Of this attitude the typical representative is St. Thomas Aquinas. It is represented in antiquity by Clement of Alexandria, but it is significant that Dr. Niebuhr can find no adequate modern example, though he mentions Bishop Butler as a tentative suggestion.

This synthesis is denied by the fourth position, which stresses the elements of disharmony and tension that are involved in Christianity. This is the position of Luther and Kierkegaard; it leads to a dualism between the kingdom of faith and the world of culture which is in some respects more radical than the simple opposition between the world and the church which characterized Tertullian and the ascetics who rejected cultural values and participation in the common life of secular society.

Finally, we have the position of those who admit the existing dualism and contradiction between the Kingdom of Christ and the world of human culture, but who see in him the dynamic principle which is capable of transforming every aspect

of human life and cultural activity—*instaurare omnia in Christo*. The representatives of this ideal of the regeneration of human society and culture are found by Dr. Niebuhr pre-eminently in St. Augustine and to a lesser degree in Calvin and Wesley and Jonathan Edwards; but among modern writers it is F. D. Maurice who expresses it most completely and who evokes Dr. Niebuhr's warmest personal sympathy.

It can be seen from this brief summary how comprehensive is Dr. Niebuhr's treatment and how anxious he is to do justice to the complexity of the subject and to the diversity of the traditional Christian attitudes. In this he reminds us of Ernst Troeltsch, who has evidently had a direct influence on his historical approach to the problem. It may be objected that his anxiety to do justice to the many-sided diversity of Christian thought has made his classification of types unduly complicated. It would surely be simpler and more logical to adopt a threefold classification, since there are in the end only three possible attitudes: the rejection of culture, the acceptance of culture, and the intermediate position of qualified acceptance and rejection which may be extended indefinitely to embrace almost all the gradations and varieties of orthodox Christian thought. In fact, there is more in common between Dr. Niebuhr's third and fifth groups—the synthesizers and the transformists—than his arrangement would suggest; for St. Thomas would not deny St. Augustine's transformism, nor would F. D. Maurice reject Clement of Alexandria's attitude of cultural synthesis. In the same way there is a close affinity between the Montanist rejection of culture and that of the radical Protestant sects, like the Anabaptists—far closer indeed than that between Tertullian and Tolstoy, who belong to different worlds. So, too, there is no real community of attitude between the Gnostics and Ritschl, who go to form Dr. Niebuhr's second group. In fact, it may be questioned whether the Gnostics are to be regarded as Christian at all, since their conception of Christ and their idea of man have far more in common with the Mahayana conception of Buddha than with anything in the Christian tradition. In these respects Dr. Niebuhr has tended to throw his net too widely, so that the limits of his field of study become blurred. For if we include Tolstoy, why not Gandhi? If the Gnostics, why not the Theosophists? If Thomas Jefferson, why not Emerson? It is only where the divinity of Christ is accepted unconditionally that the problem of Christ and culture becomes truly significant.

Yet no one can stress more clearly than Dr. Niebuhr has done the unique and transcendent character of the person of Christ as the One Lord who claims the total allegiance of Christians. He even writes that the subject with which he is concerned "is not essentially the problem of Christianity and civilization; for Christianity, whether defined as church, creed, ethics, or movement of thought, itself moves between the poles of Christ and culture. The relation of these two authorities constitutes its problem." Consequently he sees his subject as an "essay on the double wrestle of the Church with its Lord and with the cultural society with which it lives in symbiosis."

Nevertheless we must recognize that the writers and schools of thought with which Dr. Niebuhr deals did not themselves see the problem in those terms. They were not really aware of culture in the modern sense of the word—of that elaborate network of social relations and institutions, conditioned by economic forces and historical traditions, in which man is involved both consciously and unconsciously from the cradle to the grave. They were concerned primarily with opposing moral and spiritual forces—the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan—and secondarily

with the rival claims of concrete institutions, above all Church and State. There was, of course, always a tendency to identify the two hostile spiritual orders with the two rival social institutions; but it was only the fanatics and the sectarians who identified them completely, and orthodox Christianity has always recognized the authority of the state as a power ordained by God to which the Christian owed obedience and service. It is true that the primitive Christian use of the term "the world," to describe the world of man both as the object of God's love and as the kingdom of darkness which rejects Christ and persecutes his servants, easily lends itself to misunderstanding. And the same is true of the Pauline use of the word "flesh" to denote the evil principle which is at war with "the spirit" and which leads mankind to sin and death. Such a terminology can easily be misinterpreted in a Manichean dualist sense. Yet it is clear enough that St. John and St. Paul were no Manicheans—that St. John taught that the Word was made flesh for the salvation of the world, and that St. Paul believed in the redemption of the body which was the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Now the problem of Christ and culture which perplexes the modern theologian is of just the same nature as the old Christian paradoxes of the Kingdom and the world, the spirit and the flesh. In so far as human culture is the social and historical expression of fallen human nature, it belongs to the kingdom of the world and its works are works "of the flesh," so that the achievements of human civilization may be rejected by the Christian as a tower of Babel built by man for his own ends in ignorance or defiance of God. But in so far as human nature is redeemable, so also is culture. It is not possible for man to exist without culture, for that is the condition of his social existence. And the same is true of the Christian. He cannot isolate his faith from his life, and as soon as he begins to live a Christian life he begins to create a Christian culture.

This is no doubt true of every religion, but it is of peculiar significance for Christianity, because Christianity is essentially a religion of redemption which centers in the belief in a historical Person who is also the Mediator between God and Man. For the mystery of redemption by Christ is not only a theological mystery, it is also a historical event, and a creative process by which humanity is regenerated and made new.

The Pauline doctrine of the Mystical Body shows how the Incarnation is a progressive principle which extends through the Church and the Sacraments to form a living organism united to Christ as its Head. Now this vital process of spiritual change must operate on the plane of culture which is the external plane of social behavior as well as on the internal plane of faith and spiritual experience. There is no aspect of human life and no sphere of human action which is neutral or "secular" in the absolute sense.

But there still remains the problem of the inevitable conflict between the culture-changing action of the Christian minority or the individual Christian and the loyalty of the unconverted majority to the existing social order and to the inherited cultural tradition. This conflict is inescapable, and this is the real problem of Christianity and culture which every age and indeed every individual has to face. But it is a conflict which takes many different forms, from the open warfare between the persecuting state and the martyr church to the hidden process of penetration and leavening which goes on in a culture which is nominally Christian, no less than in a secular society in which Christians and non-Christians are mingled. But these differences

do not affect the essential nature of the process, which always involves the principle of conflict between two rival spiritual forces and the principle of the penetration and leavening of the natural order by the order of grace.

If this is so, it would seem that Dr. Niebuhr's fifth answer, the "Transformist" or "Conversionist" solution, is the true one, and that the transformist attitude to culture is the only one that can be regarded as Christian in the full sense of the word. No doubt particular Christian thinkers and schools of thought can concentrate their attention on one of the two elements of the transforming process, and stress either the principle of conflict or the principle of leavening and penetration, in apparent exclusion or disregard of the other. But the two elements are always present and it is impossible to deny one of them altogether without obscuring the central character of Christianity as the religion of Divine Incarnation and human salvation. Nevertheless the pluralism of Dr. Niebuhr's treatment has the advantage of widening the range of his survey and showing the same central truth from many different angles. Even those views which seem to be non-Christian or sub-Christian, like the position of Tolstoy or that of the Gnostics, help to clarify the true nature of the Christian answer. At the present time especially, when the secularization of culture has reached such a point that man's moral existence seems threatened by the impersonal nonmoral forces of totalitarian organization and total war, it is useful to remember that Christianity has never preached easy solutions or minimized the problem of evil but has faced the vision of a world prostrate under the power of evil, a world which must be both renounced and remade in the power of Christ.

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON
Oxford, England.

The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850. By WHITNEY R. CROSS. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950. xiii-383 pp. \$5.00.

The "Burned-over District" was the name given to western New York during the first half of the nineteenth century when the fires of the spirit swept over the area again and again. Religiously speaking, western New York had everything—revivalists, reformers, and prophets; saints, seers, and skeptics. This was the scene of Finney's greatest triumphs; the center of anti-Masonic agitation and communistic experiments; the nursery of Mormonism, Millerism, Spiritualism, and the perfectionism of the Oneida Community. It was in this region that the Plan of Union between the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians was initially placed in operation, and here it functioned most successfully; it was in this area that the missionary, Bible, tract, and education societies concentrated their activities and expended the larger portion of their energies.

Applying the sound principle that a limited field of investigation makes possible more careful analysis and more competent evaluation than a larger one, Whitney R. Cross has made an intensive study of the "Burned-over District" in the hope of providing answers to questions of larger import than one might expect. Not only was western New York "the storm center" from which radiated religious forces important for the country as a whole; it provides a case history of the westward transit of New England culture and serves as a representative sample of the impact upon religion of the shift from a frontier to a mature agrarian and partially urbanized society.

Western New York drew its population from the New England hill-country—

chiefly from Vermont and the Berkshires—and the religious complexion of the Yankee uplands largely determined the religious coloration of the new communities beyond the Hudson. The western hills of New England were the stronghold of the religious enthusiasm which stemmed from the Great Awakening, and here were to be found the various denominations of a shattered Congregationalism which were to become the major churches of the New Yorkers. At the head of the list were the Baptists and the Presbyterians (Congregationalists back home), the former somewhat larger, the latter possessing a margin of advantage in the number of educated ministers. These were the two upper-class denominations and were markedly similar in many respects. Behind them ranged a cluster of denominations, smaller and more "popular" in type, and yet by no means negligible numerically. They constituted the liberal wing of the New England churches—Free-will Baptists, Universalists, Christians (Unitarian Baptists), and Friends. The other major group was the Methodists, ranking in numbers but not in social prestige with the Baptists, and representing a non-Yankee infiltration. Scattered among these more conventional groups were the exotic sects, cults, and movements which sprang up in the ebb tide of revivalism.

Utilizing a wide range of sources with real discrimination, Cross reaches several arresting conclusions concerning the "Burned-over District." (1) The notion of a godless New York frontier is a myth. The contrary testimony of missionaries interested in justifying the need for missionary activity is demonstrated to be untrustworthy, and church membership statistics are shown to be quite misleading, due to the distinction which must be made between the formal and the actual constituency of the churches. The Yankees from New England were no strangers to religion, but "the test of conversion for church membership, . . . created a condition little known in recent times. An overwhelming majority of western New Yorkers sympathized with the churches and attended meeting regularly. Relatively few, however, 'professed' religion, . . . or belonged in a legal or religious sense to the church proper."

(2) Missionary activity as carried on in western New York was exceedingly effective. By 1837, the synods of western New York included almost half the membership of the entire Presbyterian church, and only Virginia and Kentucky had half as many Baptists as were to be found in New York. The same concentration of strength held true for the Universalists, the Free-will Baptists, the Christian Connection, and perhaps for the Methodists as well.

(3) Revivalism flourished in those regions which had passed beyond the frontier stage. Rural sections became enthusiastic over religion only when they had achieved economic maturity and stability, and the urban revivals occurred during the lull which followed the initial boom years.

(4) Ultraism and exotic movements developed during the ebb tide of revivalism, partially as a result of the ever more frenzied efforts of the revivalists, partially in reaction against them, and partially as a consequence of the liberating influence of the "new measures," "new men," and "new ideas" which were the concomitants of revivalism.

(5) Mormonism was not a frontier religion, either in origin or expansion, being the faith of "eastern people in the first place, while eastward-wending missionaries long continued to convert more new adherents in New York and New England than in the Middle West."

Cross also raises quite as many questions as he answers. What is the explanation of the practical disappearance in western New York of the Universalists, Friends, Free-will Baptists, and Christians, who during the earlier period were so strong and vigorous? What happened to the Congregationalists who by the late forties, after the break with the Presbyterians, equalled the Presbyterians in number? Obviously the operation of the Plan of Union, which turned Congregationalists into Presbyterians during an earlier period, does not explain the present relative position of the Congregationalists. Also, how may one account for the Presbyterian recovery and the sustained Methodist growth? An initial surmise would be that the more liberal groups do not have the staying power of the more conventional religious bodies.

The Burned-over District is an unusually illuminating book, as should be apparent to all readers of this review. At most points the discriminating judgment of the author cannot be questioned, but two dissents ought to be noted. A recurring reference to the intolerance of the orthodox runs throughout the book. "At the fountainhead of all the streams of intolerance . . . stood the Presbyterians and Congregationalists. They boasted the nondenominational character of the Plan of Union and the benevolent societies which they controlled." But "habit and circumstance . . . made the competition of any other denomination seem to be either heretical, wild and extravagant, or at least, unethical." This overlooks the fact that the competitors to whom the author refers were not just seemingly heretical; from the orthodox point of view they were actually heretical, and the orthodox could scarcely be expected to welcome their activity with enthusiasm. It also overlooks the fact that such groups as the Universalists easily excelled the more orthodox denominations in the use of epithets and vituperation. Because he writes from the point of view of modern liberal Christianity, the author has difficulty in achieving a sympathetic understanding of the vast importance which was then assigned to theological issues which today no longer seem relevant, and this absence of insight seriously qualifies his explanation of the paradox of interdenominationalism and sectarianism which was so prominent a feature of the "Burned-over District." The second dissent is to the concluding lament that only disillusionment and destruction followed in the wake of enthusiastic religion. No positive social contribution can be credited to the fires of the spirit which raged in western New York, he affirms, unless a path was opened "toward the more modern conceptions of liberal religion which the zealots had originally so consistently abhorred." Had Cross read his own manuscript more carefully, he might have been struck by the fact that "in 1850, three western New York counties equalled or exceeded the Massachusetts literacy record for the native-born," and that "the Burned-over District consistently sent a larger proportion of its children to school than did the eastern half of the state." The author also might have noted that "the tender conscience, the intense concern for the community, the preoccupation with a perfected society, long grown in the Puritan tradition" was nurtured and perpetuated among the New Yorkers by a continuing religious enthusiasm. And one wonders what evidence there is for "a marked decline in neighborly charity and human kindness" in the Yankee communities of western New York which may be attributed to religious enthusiasm of the New Englanders after they crossed the Hudson. Was the decline greater than in Connecticut, Ohio, Pennsylvania, or New Jersey? Or was there any decline at all?

WINTHROP S. HUDSON

Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, Rochester, New York.

John the Baptist. By CARL H. KRAELING. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951. xii-218 pp. \$2.50.

Carl H. Kraeling was from 1929 to 1950 Professor of the New Testament in Yale Divinity School, where he succeeded the distinguished B. W. Bacon. Since 1950 he has been Professor of Hellenistic Oriental Archeology and Director of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. After taking his theological degree in the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, he got a Ph.D. at Columbia University. Then he continued his study under Professor Martin Dibelius at Heidelberg, Germany, until he received the doctorate in theology there. Dibelius was recognized as one of the most original and also one of the soundest scholars working in the New Testament field. His specialty was form criticism. For a number of years Kraeling has also served as president of the American Schools of Oriental Research. He demonstrated his competence in archeology some years ago when he edited the *Dura-Europas* volume.

I mention all of these biographical facts to indicate how well qualified Kraeling is to undertake the difficult subject of John the Baptist. His task in this study is not only to evaluate all the biblical references to John, and a passage in the writings of Josephus in which he pays his respects to this prophet, but also the large collection of scriptures of the Mandeans, a religious sect still surviving in Mesopotamia which traces its origin back to John the Baptist. In all of this, our author's intimate knowledge of Near Eastern archeology is a constant source of enrichment.

It turns out that the New Testament is the main source of our knowledge of John. The Mandaean writings are too legendary to be of real assistance. Josephus indicates that Herod Antipas killed John on the suspicion that he was an insurrectionist. There is an illuminating chapter on John in the wilderness in which Kraeling makes good use of his knowledge of Palestine. Two chapters deal with John's preaching, in which he proclaimed imminent judgment and exhorted men to get ready by repentance.

The high point of the book is the interpretation of John's baptismal rite. Here Kraeling sees not only the influence of the Jewish proselyte baptism, but especially the impact of the Zoroastrian eschatology. The Iranian idea of an apocalyptic judgment and the purification of the world by a wave of molten metal or a river of fire, Kraeling thinks, has made a profound impression on late Judaism. John is one of the clearest reflections of this influence. His mission is to warn his countrymen of this approaching trial by fire. Baptism in a flowing river, the Jordan, by immersion, which John practiced, was a sacramental way of avoiding that final baptism in the river of fire. This is certainly an interesting interpretation of John's baptism. It is penetrating and courageous. One may hesitate at the large measure of syncretism postulated or at the subtlety and sophistication attributed to John and his converts, yet one is hard put to it to find a solution which is fully satisfying. The origin of John's rite has long been lost in an obscurity which has seemed impenetrable.

The relation of Jesus to John is dealt with most sympathetically. John is recognized for the great figure that he was in his own right. The greater young man Jesus came like the others with a sense of sin to the fiery prophet for the cleansing baptism. The moving experience turned out to be the point at which Jesus was awakened to his own profound mission and destiny. Jesus had the greatest respect for John and said that he was the Elijah who was to come, yet he soon became so different from John that two separate religious movements came into being and existed side by side. Christianity far outstripped, but never eliminated, the Baptist sect.

I am inclined to take exception to Kraeling's view that the enemies of Jesus accused him of practicing necromancy, when they said that he *had Beelzebub* and cast out demons by the prince of demons. It seems to me that necromancy, which means divination by recourse to the dead, is not the right word here. Moreover, *daimonizomenos* is not the only term for possession. *To have a demon, echin pneuma* or its equivalent is not unusual in this sense. Note Mk. 9:7 and Acts 16:16. Of course, *with an unclean spirit* is also common.

This well-written book is a substantial and welcome contribution to our New Testament scholarship. There has been a need for a good book in English on John the Baptist.

S. VERNON McCASLAND

Professor of Religion, The University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

The Old Testament and Modern Study: A Generation of Discovery and Research. Edited by H. H. ROWLEY. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1951. xxxii-405 pp. 25s.

The (British) Society of Old Testament Study, which is responsible for the publication of this valuable volume, has aided Old Testament study by extremely helpful bibliographies and surveys. Two previous similar volumes summarized the stages of research current at the time: *The People and the Book*, edited by A. S. Peake (1925); and *Record and Revelation*, edited by H. Wheeler Robinson (1938). In addition, this Society has issued annually, from 1946 to 1950, an invaluable classified Book List in which the books on Old Testament research were briefly reviewed. We in the United States have published only two similar volumes: *The Haverford Symposium on Archaeology and the Bible*, edited by E. Grant, 1938; and *The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow*, edited by H. R. Willoughby, 1947. In addition, the *Journal of Bible and Religion*, beginning with 1946, has been publishing yearly reports on research in all the theological disciplines.

If, as we may safely assume, the volume reviewed here truly describes the current tendencies in the study of the Old Testament, then we seem to be reverting to the point of view of two centuries ago, supporting it with the new archeological discoveries. We note a drastic reaction against the literary criticism of the Old Testament in favor of its theological interpretation. Biblical theology which seemed *passé* a few years ago is back again in great force, but philological studies seem to be on the decline, aside from the innumerable publications on the Ras Shamra texts.

A. B. Honeyman (pp. 276f.) admits that "the situation is least satisfactory in the manner of lexicography. For the mass of South Arabian inscriptions . . . there is as yet no dictionary. The glossary of Lidzbarski's *Handbuch* and S. A. Cook, *Glossary of Aramaic Inscriptions*, both published in 1898, have long been out of date but have not been superseded." Of course the Hebrew dictionaries of Zorell-Semkowsky and especially Köhler-Baumgartner are in course of publication and will eventually prove useful. But at present the student of biblical Hebrew advancing beyond the elementary stage is confined to the old Brown, Driver, and Briggs *Hebrew Lexicon* (1906) and to Cowley's translation of the Hebrew grammar of Gesenius-Kautzsch (2nd ed. 1910). There is little more in German and French: only the Hebrew grammars of Bergsträsser and Leander appeared since 1929; the best Hebrew grammar at present is still that of P. Jouon in French (1923; second edition without much change, 1947). In biblical Aramaic the best grammar is the German one of Bauer and Leander (1927).

Honeyman concludes that there is "a clamant need for an annual bibliography of contributions to Semitic research" (p. 281). He obviously was not aware of the magnificent Linguistic Bibliography for the Years 1939-1947, published under the auspices of UNESCO (2 vols., Spectrum, Utrecht and Brussels, 1949, 1950); the present writer has already received the bibliography for 1948, which appeared in 1951. This bibliography includes all languages, ancient and modern, and will prove invaluable; a special Semitic bibliography is unnecessary if it is issued yearly, as now planned.

Yes, our divinity students prefer philosophy to philology; few now study Hebrew, Greek, and Latin; and most of them prefer courses in metaphysics, theology, and sociology. Thus they have reversed the trend that Seneca, the Stoic philosopher who died in A.D. 65, regretted: "what was once philosophy has become philology" (*Epistle* 108). The future of biblical studies, from the point of view of genuine historical scholarship, thus seems sadly questionable.

H. H. Rowley in his editorial essay is correct when he discovers "a movement towards more conservative views" and "the treatment of the Old Testament as a fundamentally religious book . . . through which Divine revelation of enduring importance to men is given" (p. xxx). This is well, but, as he says, there is also "room for scholars of wide equipment and of profound penetration to work in this field for a very long time to come." Such scholars should, however, investigate the problems without preconceived ideas and should not follow the example of that eminent biblical archeologist, W. F. Albright, who, having decided on insufficient evidence that the Isaiah Hebrew manuscript, allegedly found in a cave near the Dead Sea in 1947, is dated in "the second half of the second century B.C." (p. 22), concludes that the "consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible . . . has been preserved with an accuracy perhaps unparalleled in any other Near-Eastern literature;" that "the discovery of hymns . . . which were composed not later than the second century B.C. . . . deals the coup de grace to the hypothesis of Maccabean Psalms;" etc. (p. 25). Through such a circular reasoning (also called begging the question) the work of the last century on the text, date, and transmission of the books of the Hebrew Bible is now cast overboard in favor of the good old traditional views.

Moreover, we find in this excellent volume much space (pp. 337-40, etc.) devoted to Wilhelm Vischer, who in two volumes expounds the witness of the Old Testament to Jesus Christ (*Das Christuszeugnis des Alten Testaments*, 1934, 1942; the first has been translated into English in 1949). For instance, the one who fought with Jacob "was not an angel but our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the eternal God and yet was to become a man whom the Jews would crucify" (p. 338). If this is a fair sample of the result of the biblical research of our time, we have truly reverted to the Middle Ages.

We should be grateful to the eminent authors who in this volume—a *must* for biblical scholars—have summarized the recent investigations: H. H. Rowley, W. F. Albright, C. R. North, N. H. Snaith, O. Eissfeldt, A. R. Johnson, W. Baumgartner, D. Winton Thomas, A. M. Honeyman, G. W. Anderson, N. W. Poterat, T. H. Robinson. They are not responsible for the scholarly nonsense which they are forced to report.

ROBERT H. PFEIFFER

Boston University School of Theology, Boston, Massachusetts.

Democracy and the Churches. By JAMES HASTINGS NICHOLS. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1951. 298 pp. \$4.50.

It is difficult for a reviewer to confine himself to the main thread of Dr. Nichols' argument, for there are many intriguing by-paths which invite his steps to wander. One would like to single out, for instance, his analysis of the principles at stake in the sending by the United States of an Ambassador to the Vatican (p. 264f.). In this particular instance the reviewer is not convinced that resigning political jurisdiction over Catholics in the United States is involved, any more than having an Ambassador to the Kremlin involves the same thing in regard to the Communists here. In both cases the control from abroad is real, but it is not political, for its ultimate sanctions lie in another realm. That both these systems of control are inimical to our political system is obvious, but their influence in this country is not materially altered by the sending or withholding of an Ambassador. But this is only one of a number of provocative observations in Dr. Nichols' book, and they are subordinate to a whole to which our attention must here be confined. That whole is a history of the relations of the churches to liberal democracy in the modern world; and it is brilliantly told and tellingly interpreted.

The conclusions which emerge from the study are three: Liberal democracy is the offspring of Puritan Protestantism which has consistently nurtured it, and, until lately, extended its influence; second, the witness of the rest of Protestantism has been much less consistent in this respect; and, third, the Roman Catholic Church has opposed democratic movements since their inception.

Dr. Nichols' term "Puritan Protestantism" refers to the common ethos of the denominations in England and America which have shared the inheritance of the Puritan Revolution, and the earlier Calvinistic or Reformed tradition in Continental Protestantism. Being a matter of ethical outlook rather than theology, it includes the Methodist, Unitarian, Quaker and other groups which do not belong to the Calvinistic family theologically speaking—as well as those that do, such as Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, etc. Recognizing the pitfalls gaping for one who seeks to isolate the cause-effect nexus in history, he has nevertheless made an impressive case for it as between Puritan Protestantism and liberal democracy. They have, so Dr. Nichols' argument runs, occupied the same geographical area for nearly three hundred years; and the Puritan Protestants' fundamental thinking about God and man leads naturally to a democratization of church *and* state, which they have consistently defended all that time in history.

Continental Lutheranism has remained consistently authoritarian in matters of political as well as ecclesiastical organization; High Anglicanism has rather yielded to democracy than championed it; Eastern Orthodoxy, till recently, "never heard of it." As to the democracy in Catholic France, though egalitarian, it was basically as authoritarian and doctrinaire as the old regime against which it revolted, in this sense that it always has precluded the discovery of new truth by discussion.

Roman Catholicism has been, and because of its own absolutist outlook and structure must inevitably be, the enemy of political democracy. There have been periods in history when the Papacy has deviated from this "line," but they have been brief, and were soon succeeded by return to the normal authoritarian policy. There have been, in addition, periods when Catholic laymen and lower clergy have sought to participate in the democratic political processes in their own countries (for example, in Belgium, France, Italy and Austria) but the Papacy effectively scotched

these movements by the beginning of the twentieth century. The basic issue has not yet been raised in England and the United States, where the opportunity for a Papal victory has not yet appeared. In these countries, the Papal policy has been rather to nibble cautiously at the edges of democratic procedure.

To return for a moment to the recent history of Puritan Protestantism, Dr. Nichols notes two disturbing features. First, Puritan Protestantism has not in recent decades maintained the moral conviction and discipline by which, in its earlier periods, it secured the permeation of political life by its ethical principles. Meanwhile Catholicism, on the contrary, has as always maintained its conviction that "politics is a branch of morals," and has striven with increasing effectiveness to graft the branch on its own authoritarian stock. Secondly (and this is partly a result of the first) the initiative has passed from the liberal democratic forces which held it for over two hundred years, to the opposing authoritarian collectivist camp, as is demonstrated by the adventures of Mussolini, Hitler and Franco. The steps the Papacy took to bless and further these adventurers are clearly recounted.

These conclusions are not new. The value of the book is not in the novelty of its conclusions, but in the incisive review of the process which led up to them, the cumulative force of which is irresistible; and in the perspective the author brings to the task and shares with us. From it we gain the clarity of the long view; and we avoid falling into the error of thinking that democracy is either self-regulative or an end in itself, and that if only the Catholics (and the Communists) would stop sniping at it, all would be well. It is good for us, too, to be reminded that democracy has its enemies on the right as well as on the left.

In the "suggested readings" and the footnotes the author refers us to secondary sources mainly, but they are dependable ones. One could wish on occasion that there were even more references, as, for instance, that there were an indication where documentation might quickly be found for the statement that Pius intervened on behalf of the murderer of Matteotti (p. 183); and for that on the near-monopoly of Catholics on key posts in the diplomatic service abroad (p. 256). It would be a help for those readers who like to see the figures for themselves to know where to turn.

Dr. Nichols pursued his study with intent to achieve objectivity, and he has achieved it: the voice of authentic history sounds in our ears as we read. But he has neither sought nor achieved neutrality, as is evident in the frequent recurrence of vigorous phrases like "Pius and his wretched Gestapo," and "the 'austere immorality' of the Counter-Reformation." Occasionally he is betrayed into a mixed figure, as when he speaks of "the new leviathan squatting in the Puritan heritage." Perhaps Hobbes' Leviathan could squat, but Job's couldn't, and readers more familiar with Job than with Hobbes will be a bit bewildered by that.

Dr. Nichols was the choice of a committee of the (then) Federal Council of Churches on Religious Tolerance to make a study of the history of the question embraced by the title of this book, which is the result of his researches. It is a masterly presentation of a complex history and the conclusions drawn therefrom. He has left all of us who cherish our democratic institutions and our Protestant heritage in his debt.

RICHARD M. CAMERON

Professor of Church History, Boston University School of Theology, Boston, Massachusetts.

The Reformation in England. Vol. 1: The King's Proceedings. By PHILIP HUGHES. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951. 404 pp. \$6.00.

History, like biography or even poetry, is to a certain degree the product of the writer's own peculiar predilection and prejudice. The hopes and fears, the ideals and aversions, the likes and dislikes of the most honest and competent historian intrude, sometimes when he is least aware, into his narrative and mar the accuracy of his report. This is seen, for example, in Eusebius, the first great Christian historian, in his prejudice against Papias, whom he represents as a man of inferior judgment and good sense. Consequently he reports only a few of Papias' observations, and as a result it is reasonable to suppose that we are denied to this day many precious truths about Jesus and about his first followers. Papias might have known more than Eusebius gave him credit for.

Now this book on the Reformation in England is written by a well-known and well-established Roman Catholic historian. His religious faith and theological predilection, therefore, must be taken into account in our appraisal of his work. To be sure, he attempts to describe the theological foundation upon which the British Reformation rested. But, when he comes to the essence of Luther's theology, he describes "justification by only faith" as "a revolutionary theory, destructive of the best part of current religious practice." He treats Zwingli as even more radical than Luther and ties both their movements in with the Lollard movement in England which had been set in motion by Wyclif a century before. Fine discrimination in points of doctrine and an appreciation of the religious spirit which produced them are totally lacking in this work.

However, the political and social implications of the Anglican Reformation are clearly understood and forcefully presented. I agree with Hughes that the initial events of the religious change in England as they were caused by Henry VIII were almost entirely personal and political. Cranmer himself under this first king appears more as a sycophant than a prophet. His great positive achievements belong rather to the later reign of King Edward VI. Part III, entitled "The King's Proceedings," is well done.

This book is a well-documented and thorough study. It is worth the serious consideration of the Protestant as well as the Roman Catholic historian. Indeed, we make a mistake in Protestantism when we neglect the writings of the Roman Catholics. They have done some excellent work in church history as well as in biblical studies. In fact, the best general surveys of church history in this generation have been done by Roman Catholic scholars. The history of the Catholic Church by the French scholar, Mourret, is admirably written. It is the only modern work that compares in style with the older work, *The History of Latin Christianity*, by Dean Milman.

Unfortunately, this book by Hughes, however, is not interestingly written. It is tedious and in spots difficult to read. In the point of view of style it does not compare with his earlier three-volume survey of church history down to the time of Luther. I do not believe that it will prove of interest to the general reader or to the Protestant pastor and preacher.

But I recommend it highly to the University professor and especially to the teacher of church history in the Protestant seminary. Intellectual honesty and a desire for breadth of view in our understanding of church history compel us to acquaint ourselves with the writings of competent Roman Catholics about Protestantism.

This book is a fair-minded, honest piece of scholarship and deserves our serious attention.

WILLIAM R. CANNON

Professor of Church History and Historical Theology, Emory University, Georgia.

Philosophy of Nature. By JACQUES MARITAIN. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1951. x-198 pp. \$3.00.

Here is a brief series of lectures by M. Maritain, apparently taken down in shorthand and then translated from the French. It is eked out by an essay on "Maritain's Philosophy of the Sciences" from the pen of Professor Y. R. Simon and reprinted from *The Thomist*, and also by a useful bibliography of M. Maritain's scattered writings in this general field.

The concern of the book is with the relation of metaphysics to the natural sciences. The author's general teaching on this subject was already familiar to us from the most elaborate of his philosophical treatises, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, published in French in 1932 and in English translation in 1937; but it is now presented in a fresh way and with some further working out of detail.

When modern empirical science emerged in the early seventeenth century, it found itself at odds with the medieval philosophy which, deriving so largely from Aristotle, had dominated the foregoing centuries. Here was a new method of enquiry, a new epistemological type, for which there was no real room either in the Aristotelian or in the medieval scheme. It was therefore rejected by those who, in the age of Galileo and Newton, still adhered to the scholastic metaphysics, while the fathers of modern philosophy, like Descartes and Bacon, in their turn felt obliged to reject that metaphysics in order to find room for the new science. This, says M. Maritain, was "a great epistemology tragedy"; and it is the misunderstanding responsible for this tragedy that he now seeks to correct.

His contention is that the modern empirical investigation of nature must be allowed its full rights, necessitating a real adjustment in the medieval scheme; but that the medieval *philosophy* of nature, as worked out by St. Thomas Aquinas and his followers, must still be allowed to stand, having a place of its own, separate on the one hand from pure metaphysics and on the other from the *sciences* of nature, and intermediate between them. Metaphysics is concerned with being as being, immutable and universal. The philosophy of nature is concerned with being as involved in the mutabilities of the sensible world, but nevertheless with the *being* that is so involved, that is, with the ontological aspects of the sensible. Science, on the other hand, is concerned with the sensible as such, with the observable and especially with the measurable.

A single quotation may help to elucidate this distinction. "Think on the one hand," writes M. Maritain, "of the definition of a geosynclinal in geology, of verbal blindness in psychology, of a chemical species in chemistry, of mass or energy in physics; and on the other hand think of the philosophical definitions of the four causes, of transitive action and immanent action, of corporeal substance and operative powers. If you compare these two groups of definitions, you will find that they are arrived at by wholly different analyses and from different intellectual directions: in one case the definition is sought by means of possibilities of observation and measurement, by effectual physical operations; in the other it is sought by means of ontological characteristics, of elements that constitute a nature or intelligible essence. . . ."

This contention is set forth with great learning, with remarkable knowledge of modern discussions of scientific method, and with the keenest philosophical acumen. M. Maritain's case is undoubtedly a strong one. For those who accept the Thomist philosophy, it must surely be convincing, while those who do not must ask themselves very seriously how far they can take up into their own alternative scheme the important distinction which he has been at such pains to draw.

It is a pity that the printer has worked havoc with the few words given in the original Greek, as on pages 3 and 5.

JOHN BAILLIE.

Dean of the Faculty of Divinity, New College, The University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Christian Faith and Practice. By LEONARD HODGSON. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951. xii-116 pp. \$2.25.

The Doctrine of the Atonement. By LEONARD HODGSON. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951. 159 pp. \$2.50.

The Ecumenical Movement. Three Lectures. By LEONARD HODGSON. The University Press, The University of the South, Sewanee, Tennessee, 1951. 50 pp. 50¢.

Three discussions from the pen of Dr. Leonard Hodgson were published in the year 1951. Dr. Hodgson is Regius Professor of Divinity and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford. For six years he was Professor of Christian Apologetics in the General Theological Seminary in New York City. He is the author of a number of books dealing usually with theological and philosophical matters.

Christian Faith and Practice consists of seven lectures which summarize material given at Oxford University over a period of eleven years. Oxford was officially a Christian University and these lectures gave students an opportunity to investigate the nature of the religion to which the University was thus formally committed. Some sentences from the excellent analysis of the contents which Professor Hodgson himself provides will reveal the genius of the book. "A man's creed is shown by his life." The Bible is "the record of the Divine action which gives the Christian his key to the understanding of the universe." The Old Testament is "God's education of man in knowledge of himself." The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation "asserts that Jesus Christ was God living a genuinely human life on earth." The church is "the fellowship of forgiven sinners adopted to share the sonship of Christ and to be the earthly body through which he carries on his work." "For most men their religion begins by a turning away from the world toward God." But the Christian will find that God "turns him round to face the world and to share his interests in it, as adopted to share in the sonship of Christ." When one goes carefully through the book he finds much careful and felicitous statement and a constant and not unsuccessful attempt to say everything in such fashion that it will be within the reach of students who do not have a technical religious vocabulary. The spirit of the book is gracious and friendly. One comes upon acute analysis and then one comes upon uncritical assumptions. Dr. Hodgson is so good an Anglican that he does not find it hard to accept some positions which he holds as a churchman without very critical analysis. But the students at Oxford who listened to him must have felt that they were in constant contact with a highly cultivated mind and one which

had by no means failed to become aware of the ways of what we rather oddly call the modern mind.

The Doctrine of the Atonement consists of the Hale Lectures delivered in 1950 at the Seabury-Western Theological Seminary. The Atonement has to do with "God's redemptive activity in Christ." The Old Testament reveals God educating his people in moral insight. There are various kinds of evil. The hard core of evil is that deliberate and responsible wrong doing which we must call sin. Back of redemption is creation. In the Atonement we see the Creator as Redeemer. Our sins have failed either to implicate or to embitter God. The sufferings of Christ so reveal the love of God as to win sinners to repentance. In his suffering death Christ—God in Christ—won the right to forgive sins without any risk to his eternal goodness. The perfect sacrifice was made by One who throughout his life "had been giving himself to the work of taking evil and transforming it into material for the creation of good." In all this we see God in action in history. Because of what God has done in Christ, forgiveness is waiting for every sinner that repents.

Dr. Hodgson refers to various theories of the Atonement with appreciation and with criticism. Some readers will be shocked by a casual sentence in connection with a particular theory of the Atonement: "It is perhaps salutary for the Englishman to reflect that life among slow-witted truth tellers might seem intolerably dull to the more nimble-witted Levantine." All along the way of the discussion one comes across sentences of splendid penetration: "In order to exercise our freedom we need to live in a world which offers a combination of determinateness and contingency." "He has shown that for him treachery, torture and death were unable to break the power of his love."

Dr. Hodgson manages to conduct his discussion of the Atonement with very little reference to or dependence on the Pauline stream of thought.

The brochure, *The Ecumenical Movement*, consists of lectures given at the University of the South during the month of March in 1950. Dr. Hodgson goes back to the World Student Christian Federation and the International Missionary Council. Then he discusses the relation of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work and the World Conference on Faith and Order to the ongoing movement. The fashion in which everything consummated in the World Council of Churches is carefully described. Many persons will be glad to keep this brochure in their files for a quick and careful summary of facts not always within one's easy reach. Dr. Hodgson tells how he first came into the Faith and Order Movement in 1933 and moved from abysmal ignorance to some real knowledge of other ways of holding and practicing the Christian faith. It was good for an Anglican to learn what other communions are like when they are seen from within. This enlargement of understanding came to men of every ecclesiastical group and has been one of the most important results of the movement. Dr. Hodgson believes that as a result of this movement we are witnessing the opening of a new period of church history.

These volumes often offer wise guidance and always the stimulus which comes from following a very active and well-disciplined mind.

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH

New York City. Formerly Dean of Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey.

The Scandal of Christianity. By EMIL BRUNNER. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1951. 116 pp. \$2.00.

The Gospel of God. By ANDERS NYGREN. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1951. 104 pp. \$2.00.

The name of Emil Brunner is well known in America. His name has been often associated with that of Karl Barth, though he is also often Barth's sharp critic.

The little book, *The Scandal of Christianity*, contains five lectures delivered at McCormick Theological Seminary in 1946. In these lectures Dr. Brunner deals with five "stumbling blocks" of the Christian message, things in the gospel against which the natural man cannot but react and revolt. These "scandalous" doctrines with which he deals are historical revelation, the Trinity, original sin, the Mediator, and resurrection.

Dr. Brunner notes with satisfaction that there is a growing interest in religion, but at the same time there is a deep abyss which separates modern religion from Christian faith. Modern religion, he says, is the religion of immediacy, and with it the repudiation of a historical revelation. Man resents the assertion of historic Christian faith that he cannot save himself. He ignores the fact that sin separates him from a holy God.

The doctrine of the Trinity separates the Christian from all philosophical, speculative, rationalist ideas of God. A trait common to all philosophical ideas of God is that he is "a God who is found by way of thinking," but the God of the Christian faith is "the One giving himself in love and thereby revealing himself as love." Brunner concludes, "It is the scandal of God's holy love, giving itself to sinful men in the person of the crucified Lord, against which natural man even in his highest religious aspirations reacts."

In like manner modern man is unaware of the problematic nature of his being. All idealistic conceptions of man assert "a continuity between the divine and the creaturely," whereas Christian thought recognizes an absolute barrier between God and man because of the fact of man's sinfulness. The assertion that man is responsible for his sin yet cannot save himself is for many a stumbling block to faith.

According to Christian faith God is a holy God who "takes himself seriously." Because of the rupture of communion through sin man is under "the wrath of God." This wrath of God is a reality, but it does not represent God's essence. God is love. The Cross of Christ is the event in which that love is revealed and because of which the divine forgiveness cannot be taken lightly. The moral self-esteem of man who denies his sin and guilt and his need of grace and forgiveness causes him to revolt against the idea of the Cross.

The resurrection teaches us that the perfection of God's creation rests with God and not with man. It denies that the opposition between the world and the gospel will be overcome in time. But man, imbued with utopian ideas of progress, believes that he is the master of his own destiny, and can create of himself a new heaven upon earth. On the other hand the gospel asserts that it is only through the action of God that the new creation can be brought to pass.

This little book has the great merit of presenting closely reasoned yet not abstruse discussions of some of the great Christian doctrines. These are basic in all theological thinking and vital preaching. The book presents a great deal in a small compass and reveals Dr. Brunner's skill in writing of the deepest theological ideas with directness and simplicity.

Somewhat complementary to Dr. Brunner's book is another slender volume entitled, *The Gospel of God*, by Bishop Anders Nygren. Bishop Nygren is a foremost Scandinavian theologian and churchman whose book, *Agape and Eros*, is extremely significant.

This present book gives an excellent introduction both to his thought and spirit, for it is a long pastoral letter devoted "almost exclusively to the question of the central task, the bearing forth of the Gospel concerning Christ."

In a very personal and deeply spiritual and devotional spirit he expounds this gospel as it relates to preaching, teaching, the Sacraments, the Church and the world. Standing in the broad stream of Lutheran theology, he is without any narrow sectarian bias. Any evangelical minister will find his own task freshly illuminated by Bishop Nygren's work.

Both books reflect similar theological points of view—strong, biblical, theological thinking. They complement each other admirably—the one as an exposition of basic Christian doctrines, and the other relating their meaning and relevance to the minister's central task. These books represent excellent reading in preparation for the Lenten season.

ALBERT J. PENNER

Broadway Tabernacle Church, Congregational, New York City.

The Structure of the Divine Society. By F. W. DILLISTONE. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1951. 263 pp. \$4.00.

This volume may be described as a study in analogies. Its author is an Anglican theologian who has strong sympathies for certain elements in Presbyterianism. The Lutheran doctrine of the church is considered only incidentally in an appendix, for the author admits that he does not have great familiarity with it, and its consideration would have spoiled his neat scheme. The conclusion is really a plea for Presbyterian and Episcopal unity on the ground that these two bodies have preserved the truest forms of the church and each emphasis needs correction by the other.

Dillistone finds six types of Christian community: the monastic, imperial, organic, covenantal, contractual, and sectarian. The first and the last are least Christian, in his view, though he does not go into particulars about the sectarians who are as far off the track as monasticism. The imperial and contractual types are relatively better, but it is only the middle two which are truly dynamic.

The organic and covenantal conceptions are traced from the earliest times to the collapse of the League of Nations, an example of the failure of the covenantal principle when uncorrected by the organic. Much attention is given to secular applications of these principles. Augustine, Aquinas and Hooker appear as historic advocates within the church of the organic conception and Calvin of the covenantal. But stress upon the organic aspect may lead to distortion, as in Mascal, and the stress on the covenantal may lead to a contract theory, as in New England theology. There must be a union of the two in order to preserve the truth of "heirs of the covenant in one body."

Though this volume contains many helpful insights, it suffers from two serious deficiencies. First, the biblical conception of the covenant is not given adequate analysis. Modern biblical monographs in this area are not taken into consideration. No attention is given to why the Septuagint should choose the Greek word *diatheke* to render *berith*. Paul's teaching is dismissed with the excuse that he had suffered

from a bad inheritance in his Jewish experience. The teaching of the Letter to the Hebrews is dismissed as being "off the main biblical line," despite the fact that it is the New Testament book which makes the most of the conception.

In the second place, attention throughout is focused on analogies with other spheres of life to the neglect of the unique character of the church as the eschatological people of God. This aspect receives almost no attention. Some of us would hold that the genius of the church is to be understood not from comparisons derived from general human experience but in its own distinctive uniqueness.

Nevertheless, the volume is to be welcomed for its recognition of the fact that the church cannot be confined within one narrow definition. There is a place for more than one pattern, without this involving exclusion from the one Church of Christ. It is to be hoped that American readers of this volume will go on to follow the wider perspective of theological discussion about the church as that is authoritatively presented by J. Robert Nelson in his *The Realm of Redemption*. As the attention of Christendom focuses upon the Faith and Order discussions at Lund next summer these volumes should stimulate deeper thinking upon the issues involved.

CLARENCE T. CRAIG

Dean, Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey.

The Physicians: A Novel. By HAZEL LIN. New York: John Day, 1951.
\$3.00.

This is a notable story, designed to refute the widespread belief among the uninformed that "Chinese medicine conveys a dark picture of charms, magic, concoctions, painful manipulation, and unsightly plaster." It begins, as it should, in a Chinese home, whose head is Wang Kung, an eminent physician of the old school of medicine. The child, for whom they had waited so long, proved to be a girl, and the mother died at the baby's birth. No wonder the grandfather was peeved. "Call her anything!" he told the maid, "or better still, call her Hsiao-chen, which means a small particle of dust. That is all she is. She is a worthless child whose birth brought us much sorrow."

For five years little Hsiao-chen lived out in the servants' quarters, for it took all that time for the grandfather to become reconciled. But from the moment he let the little one come and live in the main courtyard, as his own son's child, she became his companion and mainstay. After a few more years, when the child became ill with a severe attack of dysentery, and the old doctor's medicines failed to prove effective, the gateman and his wife came and pleaded to be allowed to "take our little mistress to the white doctors at the big foreign hospital and see if there is anything they can do for her." That, of course, aroused a storm of protest from the nurse as well as from old Grandfather. So they went to the bedside of the desperately ill patient and asked her whether she would like to go to the foreign hospital. Much to their surprise, she nodded her head feebly and was barely able to whisper, "Yes." They were startled, of course, to find that the nurses over there all wore white clothes for, as everyone ought to know, white was the color of mourning. After Hsiao-chen recovered fully, they let her go to a Christian school in Peking, where she did brilliantly.

After school, Hsiao-chen, now the darling of Grandfather's heart, insisted that she was going to be a doctor. Wang Kung yielded, but reminded his granddaughter of her proud ancestry. "Don't forget that you are a Wang," he would remind her.

In time the girl went on to graduate from Peking Union Medical College, so called because, in 1906, Dr. Thomas Cochrane of England persuaded the three British and the three American doctors at the Christian hospitals in Peking to pool their institutions. By 1921, the Rockefeller Foundation took over the union institution, rebuilt and enlarged it so that, before long, it became the top scientific medical college in all Asia.

Before long, Hsiao-chen persuaded Grandfather to let her go to America for graduate study. In time, Grandfather Wang came over as well. Following the theories of old Chinese medicine, she began research on rats, in the field of kidney disease. Her inquiries proved, in time, that Kidney Extract 469 was effective in lessening the disease conditions in the rats. She kept working ceaselessly to demonstrate the validity of her conclusions, "her grandfather's conclusions," she reminded herself. To her surprise, one day she received a letter from the American Society of Scientific Medical Research, saying that she was to be honored by the Society for her successful work.

The story ends as we should expect, with old Doctor Wang and young Hsiao-chen standing side by side on the platform where she was to receive the distinguished honor. After the Society's citation had been read, she rose and addressed the audience, telling them that the person who had made countless sacrifices in her behalf, and who, out of his rich experience in Chinese medicine, had given her the original suggestion on which her whole program of kidney research had been based, was her grandfather, now standing beside her. It was a great picture, the old Chinese physician and the young doctor, standing side by side.

EDWARD H. HUME, M.D.

New York City.

Windows of Faith. By NORMAN M. GUY. Nashville, Tenn.: The Parthenon Press, 1951. 192 pp.

The reader of this book by Dr. Guy will have a fascinating experience. He will find satisfaction in following the trails of a genuinely thoughtful mind. Everything said has been carefully considered and it all bears the marks of disciplined intelligence. Then, the book is the product of a thoroughly sane mind. Obsessions are fascinating; they also have a way of becoming sinister. Hot emotion never takes the place of clear good judgment in this book. The book is also the product of a cultivated mind. Ripe, rich words from the literature of the past, incident and illustration from the experience of the past, come readily to the service of the writer's pen. It is a book of large humanity. You feel that the author is interested in people. You feel that he is interested in all sorts of people. You feel that he has a genuinely friendly mind. You feel as you read this book that the author has windows all the while open toward the great realities of the spiritual world. You feel that he believes in man because he believes in God and Christ and all the living sanctions of the Christian religion. The reader finds himself transported into a realm of serene faith not unmindful of life's tragedies, but beyond the tragedy finding the peace and the power of God.

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH

New York City.

Book Notices

Nations Have Souls. By ANDRÉ SIEGFRIED. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1952. 213 pp. \$3.00.

The author of *America Comes of Age* (twenty-five years ago) has written a masterly book on "patterns of national culture in the world of today," distinguished by French wit and clarity of mind, and based on a wealth of study and experience. Intuitions and generalizations about "national souls," we know, can be dangerous; but when kept within bounds, they may have charm and validity. In his opening chapter, "The New Face of the World," he surveys the present threats to the spirit of man; he notes that "the various nations that are the mainstays of Western civilization face this problem with possibilities rendered very varied by their traditional psychologies," and proposes to examine these psychologies.

The titles of the following six chapters do not begin to indicate the clearly drawn yet complex patterns delineated in each case, traced to their various ethnic and geographical determinants—but they are suggestive: "Latin Realism," "French Ingenuity," "English Tenacity," "German Discipline," "Russian Mysticism," "American Dynamism." Russia he finds essentially Asiatic, with contradictory elements never fused into a mature civilization. America, "having once had an individuality, has lost it and is now in process of forming another." He finds a contrast between our "governing strata," active and still largely Anglo-Saxon and Protestant, and the growing passivity of the "average American," conformist, anxious for jobs, mass-minded.

In his closing chapter he points out that the whole of Western civilization was determined by the Greek stress on intellect and on democracy and by the Jewish faith in the God of Abraham and passion for individual morality and social justice. The social protest translated itself also into Marxism, but the Hebraic influence is more active among Protestant Anglo-Saxons, he says, than anywhere else. But this spiritual stream has been harnessed to material progress and even imperialism, "a transposition that is perhaps treason." He finds cause for misgiving as to the survival of the basic European values, in that both Russia and America are powers of continental scope with "the mass in the ascendant."

Conflict and Conciliation of Cultures. By RALPH TYLER FLEWELLING. Stockton, Calif.: College of the Pacific Press, 1952. x-106 pp. \$3.00.

This attractive little book by the Editor of *The Personalist* and Director Emeritus of the School of Philosophy at the University of Southern California consists of a lecture series, much of which appeared also in *The Personalist*. In the conflict between East and West, he finds several clashes of basic attitude: the Oriental passivity which invites despotism and the Western aggressiveness which has gotten out of hand; the Eastern cyclic theory of history and consequent introversion and fatalism, and the Western enthusiasm for linear progress in time, material betterment, and "manifest destiny." Both types have their strong points, and need to be reconciled through a higher principle—the intrinsic value of personality. Dr. Flewelling's thesis is that "the conflict of cultures must become a conciliation of cultures in the general recognition of man as potentially a son of God."

The latent divinity of every man ("yet thou hast made him a little lower than God") is implied by the Deity of Jesus; it "might become the basis for world understanding" and "is the very core of Christianity and Democracy." Types of Christianity which deny it and show contempt for man are tinged by Oriental

absolutism. A Christianity which affirms it will throw off provincialism and take seriously whatever truth is shared with it by other religions. Although much in the far-Eastern religions depreciates personality and tends to lose it in the Absolute, their Scriptures also contain statements of the presence of God in man ("God's light dwells in the self, and nowhere else"—Bhagavadgita). Sanctity of personality, then, is the basis on which he hopes East and West may learn to agree. One cannot but ask, however, whether it is likely that orthodox and neo-orthodox Christians will find it realistic to accept this apotheosis of man; or that the majority of far-Eastern religionists (or even all Christians!) will agree without reservations that "the Deity of the Man of Nazareth is essential to universal religion. It recognizes potential incarnation in every man under the sun." However, one can hardly conceive of any other line of reconciliation which would be more promising than this one!

Chapter III, "Contrasting Senses of Tragedy," with its penetrating treatment of tragic literature from the Greeks to Thomas Mann and Robinson Jeffers, and Chapter IV, "Symmetry and Dissymmetry in Art and Science," show other aspects of Dr. Flewelling's wide scope and breadth of vision.

The Superstitions of the Irreligious. By GEORGE HEDLEY. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951. viii-140 pp. \$2.50.

This is a well-written and delightfully human book aimed at the different current types of "irreligious"—hard-headed businessmen, Marxist intellectuals, and secularist college-campus intellectuals, who, each for their own reasons, prejudge religion as an out-of-date superstition. These are themselves superstitious, says Dr. Hedley, chaplain and professor at Mills College and former director of the Pacific Coast Labor School. "The hallmark of superstition is unwillingness to examine the facts in a given case . . . under compulsions which he not only does not understand, but which also he refuses to try to understand."

Among the superstitions which he proceeds to expose in the light of historical and contemporary religion are: "that the content and emphasis of religious thought and teaching undergo no change," "that we can understand our cultural heritage without knowledge of our religious traditions," "that religion is necessarily at odds with fact and reason," "that religion is an escape mechanism," "that religious people are socially unconscious," "that ideals are impractical."

He concludes, however, with the observation that our modern Athenians, like Paul's, are also characterized by the positive sense of the Greek word: "very religious." They are "devout seekers of truth," "loyal defenders of value," and "honestly seek the well being of man." Shrewdly noting that the majority of readers of this book will be those within the church rather than those outside, he finds that the blame for the latter's superstition rests largely upon us, and that it can be remedied only by our development of both intelligence and real joy in our own religious commitment.

Rediscovering the Bible. By BERNHARD W. ANDERSON. New York: Association Press, 1951. xiii-272 pp. \$3.50.

The Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at Colgate-Rochester has written a Haddam House book on the Bible, primarily for intelligent young people. He acknowledges that his students at the University of North Carolina last year were "in a real sense co-authors," especially a student committee who thoroughly discussed each chapter. The approach is not precritical; "we shall assume that one can take

the Bible seriously without taking it literally." However, the presentation is "confessional" rather than neutral. In each chapter the author "interweaves both a problem-centered approach and a consideration of the dramatic unity of Scripture" as it leads toward the climactic good news of the New Testament. For example, "God's Action in History: What is the role of the Chosen People in the Bible?" "Israel Comes of Age: What should be our attitude toward the immoralities of the Old Testament?" The method, he admits, leaves some "glaring omissions"; but he has succeeded in presenting a biblical introduction which is very much alive.

The Prayers of John Donne. By HERBERT H. UMBACH. New York: Bookman Associates, 1951. 109 pp. \$2.50.

The Poetry of John Donne. A Study in Explication. By DONIPHAN LOUTHAN. New York: Bookman Associates, 1951. 193 pp. \$3.50.

These are attractive companion books on the Elizabethan poet and divine whom Umbach calls "a modern for more than three hundred years." Dr. Umbach, professor of English at Valparaiso University (Indiana) has selected and edited the prayers from the earliest sources, and supplies a thirty-page introduction on "statements by John Donne on the idea of prayer." The prayers themselves are taken variously from his poems, from *Essays in Divinity* and *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, from his letters and his sermons. This book is meant both for Christian devotional purposes and for Donne scholars.

The second book is clearly designed for those who already know Donne, and is a specialized study, but is written by one who, a poet himself, shows originality, humor, and insight. Dr. Louthan teaches English at North Carolina State College. He attempts to analyze and evaluate Donne the poet as distinct from Donne the priest and Donne the person. His thesis is that "many misconceptions of Donne criticism are due directly to superficial reading of the poems, and importation of patterns which patently do not fit them."

The Tudor Books of Private Devotion. By HELEN C. WHITE. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1951. 284 pp. \$4.75.

The subject matter of this scholarly work seems highly specialized, but it is treated by a skillful and sensitive writer whose mind is Catholic in both the specific and the general sense of the word. The books of private devotion current in sixteenth-century England, some of them expressing the official effort to guide the faithful in the proper channels, some of them following more freely the aspiration of individual seekers, are placed in the broader setting of the whole history of Christian devotional literature.

In her introduction she speaks of the relation between private and public prayer: "private prayer antedates public and may fairly be considered the root and source of the latter;" the man gifted in this kind of expression, like any other artist, "satisfies not only his own need but his inarticulate brother's as well." On the other hand, "even the most individual and exalted expression of private devotion has its social indebtedness." She finds that from one prayer collection to another, considerable continuity persisted through this period of revolutionary change. There was, however, a gradual shift of emphasis on the humanness of Christ, historically associated with devotion to his mother, to an emphasis on God the Father which belonged to that phase of the Protestant Reformation.

New Birth: A Study of the Evangelical Doctrine of Conversion in the Protestant Fathers. By BERNHARD CITRON. Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 1951. xvi-215 pp. 21s.

Hugh Watt, Principal Emeritus of New College, asserts in a preface that this book (the first theological publication of the Edinburgh University Press) fills the need for a "broad and penetrating consideration of the whole doctrine of conversion," as distinct from various popular works on the "experience" of conversion. It takes into account such varying classical traditions in Christian thought as the Roman, Calvinist, Lutheran, and Methodist.

Let no one think, however, that this book is merely a historical survey of the development of doctrine. Dr. Citron, a parish minister, is himself a convert, from a background of German-Jewish humanism. He says in his introduction: "I shall try to visualize the life of a Christian man from its first awakening to its ultimate fulfillment, and I shall examine at each stage how this progress is reflected in the doctrine of the church. . . . So closely are doctrine and experience linked in this treatise that even the chronicler feels compelled to begin with a confession of his own faith. Particular points of doctrine had to be illustrated either from my own or from other people's experiences." The resulting combination of erudition in the history of theology with a fresh and living approach is a rare event.

Religious Ethics and the Politics of Power. By VERNON H. HOLLOWAY. New York: The Church Peace Union, 1951. 72 pp. 50¢ (pap.).

Dr. Holloway, formerly connected with the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches, now teaching religion and philosophy at Denison University (Ohio), has a wide and deep background in the fields of religion and international relations. International politics is discussed in the light of historical perspective, the present actual possibilities to which pacifist idealism is seen as irrelevant, and a comprehensive view of the principles of religious ethics. This is a useful booklet for church groups and individuals; questions for discussion and suggestions for further reading are included.

Pastoral Care. Edited by J. RICHARD SPANN. New York: The Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951. 272 pp. \$2.50.

Here is a symposium in which nineteen outstanding American pastors and chaplains pool their insights and experience on "the compassionate meeting of need" in the pastoral ministry. Five contribute chapters on "The Background of Pastoral Care"—its history, qualifications and preparation, ethics, administration of program, and Christian education. Under "The Field for Pastoral Care," there are chapters on children, youth, young newlyweds, middle-aged church members, "senior" church members. The sick, the alcoholics, those with milder psychological problems, the mentally ill, and those in institutions are then discussed. Also there are chapters on church officials, new church members, and the unchurched. Among the writers are C. F. Kemp, R. J. Fairbanks, L. E. Foster, L. M. Adkins, P. B. Maves, W. F. Rogers, J. H. Burns, D. A. MacLennan, R. A. Preston. This is a handbook containing considerable wisdom, and at times humor; it should be helpful in a variety of situations.

E. H. L.

